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# SELECTIONS

FROM

## THE PROSE AND POETRY

OF

ALFRED DE MUSSET.

*translated by Mrs. Owen Webster  
her husband wrote "The Virginian",  
later — in 1911?*

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## PREFACE.



PROBABLY no one ever tried to translate anything, however short and simple, without throwing down his pen in utter despair before he came to the end. Whatever difficulties are usually met with in such essays, were found tenfold strong in the present instance. When the task was accomplished, the questions arose: Will not this author be incomprehensible to all not only unfamiliar with his native language, but with his native country? and will not all who are likely to understand him, know him already? Owing to such considerations, these translations, made long ago, remained unpublished; why offer an English version of De Musset to those who could read him in French? An article, however, which appeared less than a year ago in an English review, proved at least that all who read De Musset do not appreciate

him ; and this, and the desire one always feels to share intellectual enjoyment with others, combined with some other reasons, finally determined their publication. Some of the finest poems have not even been attempted, and imperfect as all the translations, prose and verse, may seem, even to a careless reader, how infinitely far they fall short of the spirit, grace, and beauty of the original, one who has made the endeavor to put them into English alone can judge. But no water is ever brought away from the spring perfectly fresh.

There must necessarily be but few out of France who can enjoy De Musset greatly, but to them, wherever they may be, these poor attempts are dedicated.

S. B. W.

GERMANTOWN, Pa., Dec., 1869.

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## TALES.



THE  
STORY OF A WHITE BLACKBIRD.

How glorious but sad it is to be an exceptional blackbird! I am not a fabulous bird, for Mr. Buffon has described me, but alas I am extremely rare, and very difficult to find; would to heaven that I were impossible.

My father and mother were two good people who lived for a number of years in the shades of a secluded old garden in the Marais. It was a model household: my mother laid her eggs regularly three times a year in a thick thorn-bush, and hatched them as she dozed with patriarchal fidelity, while my father, who, notwithstanding his great age, was exceedingly spruce and brisk, hopped about her all day long, bringing her fine insects, which he caught delicately by the tip of the tail in order not to disgust his wife; and at night-fall, if the weather was fine, he never failed to regale her with a serenade which delighted the whole neighborhood. No quarrel, not the smallest cloud, had ever troubled this tender union.

I had scarcely come into the world, when, for the first time in his life, my father began to show ill tem-

per. Although as yet I was only a doubtful gray, he could not detect in me either the color or shape of his numerous progeny.

"What a dirty child," he would sometimes say, with an oblique glance. "The imp must be incessantly poking in rubbish and dirt to be so ugly and smutty."

"La! my dear," my mother would reply, as she sat rolled up like a ball in an old porringer where she had made her nest, "don't you know all that belongs to his age? Were you not a charming good-for-naught yourself in your day? Let our chick alone until he is grown up and you shall see how handsome he will be; he is one of the finest I have ever hatched."

But though my mother spoke up for me she did not deceive herself; she saw my fatal plumage put forth and considered it a monstrosity; but, like many other mothers, she was drawn to her offspring by the very fact of Nature's unkindness, as if the fault were her own, or as though trying to make amends, in advance, for her child's hard fate.

When the time came for my first moulting, my father became pensive and watched me closely. While my feathers were falling out, he treated me with some kindness, and even brought me bird-feed when he saw me almost naked, shivering in a corner; but from the moment that my poor half-frozen wings began to be covered with down again, as each white feather appeared, he fell into such a rage that I was

afraid he would strip me outright. Alas ! I had no mirror ; I did not understand the cause of his fury, and asked myself why the best of fathers should be so barbarous to me.

One day a ray of sunshine, and my growing coat having made me light-hearted despite myself, I was fluttering about in a leafy alley, and by ill luck I began to sing. At the first note my father shot into the air like a rocket.

"What do I hear?" he cried. "Is that the way a blackbird whistles? Is that the way I whistle? Is that whistling at all?" and alighting near my mother, he cried, with a terrible countenance: "Wretched female, who has been laying in your nest?"

At those words my mother, outraged, flew from her porringer, hurting one of her claws; she strove to speak, but was choked by sobs and fell to the ground almost swooning. Seeing her at the point of death, I threw myself, terrified and trembling, at my father's feet.

"Oh my father!" I cried, "if I am ill-feathered and whistle out of tune, let not my mother be the victim. Is it her fault that nature has refused me a voice like yours? Is it her fault I have not your beautiful yellow beak and black coat which make you look for all the world like an undertaker eating an omelette? If Heaven has made me a monster and some one must suffer for it, let it be me alone!"

"That is not to the purpose," said my father.

“What is the meaning of the absurd way in which you were whistling? Who taught you to whistle in that manner, contrary to all rule and custom?”

“Alas, sir!” I replied humbly, “I whistled as well as I could, feeling gay because it is so fine, and perhaps because I have eaten too many flies.”

“That is not the way we whistle in my family,” returned my father, fairly beside himself. “We have been whistling from father to son for centuries, and I’d have you know that when my voice is heard in the evening, an old gentleman on the first floor and a grisette in the garret open their windows to listen. Is it not enough to have to see the frightful color of your ridiculous feathers, which give you the look of a powdered merry-andrew at a fair? If I were not the most peaceable of blackbirds, I should have plucked you, a hundred times, as clean as a chicken ready for roasting!”

“Well then!” I cried, indignant at my father’s injustice: “if it be so, sir, let this end it! I will withdraw from your presence: I will relieve your eyes of the sight of this unfortunate white tail, by which you tweak me from morning till night. I will go, sir, I will flee: as my mother lays three times a year, other children will console you: I will go far hence to hide my misery, and perhaps,” I added sobbing, “perhaps I may find in a neighbor’s kitchen-garden, or in the gutter of some roof, a few earth-worms or spiders to sustain my wretched existence.”

"Very well," replied my father, not the least moved by this speech; "only let me see no more of you. You are not my son, you are not a blackbird at all."

"And what am I then, sir, if I may ask?"

"I know nothing about that; but you are no blackbird."

And with these paralyzing words, my father slowly withdrew.

My mother got up painfully, and hopped limping away, to shed the rest of her tears in her porringer.

As for me, bewildered and forlorn, I took wing as well as I could, and perched, as I had declared I should do, upon the spout of a neighboring roof.

My father had the inhumanity to leave me in this mortifying position for several days. Notwithstanding his violence, however, he had a good heart, and by the sidelong glances he stole at me, I saw well enough that he would have been glad to pardon me and call me back. Still more so my mother, who continually raised eyes full of tenderness toward me, and went so far sometimes as to invite me by a little plaintive chirp; but in spite of themselves, my horrible white plumage inspired them with a repugnance and fear for which I saw too well there was no help.

"I am not a blackbird," I repeated to myself, and indeed, as I washed myself in the morning, and saw my reflection in the water of the spout, I perceived only too clearly how little I looked like my family. "Oh Heaven," I groaned aloud, "teach me what I am."

One night it rained in torrents, and I was about to fall asleep, worn out with hunger and grief, when I saw a bird alight near me, more draggled, paler, and thinner than I thought a bird could be. He was nearly my own color, as well as I could judge through the rain with which we were both drenched; he had barely enough feathers to cover a sparrow, and yet he was larger than I. He struck me at first as positively indigent looking, but notwithstanding the storm which beat upon his bald forehead, he had an air of nobility which attracted me. I modestly made him a low bow, to which he responded by a peck, which nearly knocked me from the roof.

Seeing that I was about to withdraw, much mortified, without attempting to pay him in his own coin, he inquired, —

“Who are you?” in a voice as hoarse as his head was bald.

“Alas, my lord,” I replied, dreading another thrust, “I cannot tell. I once thought I was a blackbird, but I have been convinced that I am nothing of the sort.”

The oddness of my reply and my tone of sincerity, interested him. He drew nearer and made me tell him my story, which I did with all the melancholy and meekness befitting my position and the terrible weather.

“If you were a carrier-pigeon like me,” he said, after hearing me out, “the trifles you are grieving over would not distress you for a moment. We travel:

that is our existence: we have our love affairs too, but I do not know who my father was. To cleave the air, to traverse space, to see mountains and plains at our feet, to breathe the very azure of the skies and not the miasmas of earth, to fly like an arrow to the mark, which we never miss, — such is our life and our happiness. I can go further in one day than a man in ten.”

“Upon my word, sir,” said I, a little emboldened, “you are a Bohemian bird.”

“What matter of that?” he answered. “I have no country: I care for but three things in life; my journeys, my wife, and my little ones. Wherever my wife is, there is my country.”

“But what is that hanging from your neck? It looks like a crumpled curl-paper.”

“Those are papers of importance,” he replied, puffing himself up, “I am on my way to Brussels, carrying a piece of news to —— the celebrated banker, which will lower the rate of interest two per cent.”

“Good heavens!” I exclaimed, “yours is a happy life. I feel sure that Brussels is a town well worth seeing. Couldn’t you take me with you? as I am not a blackbird, perhaps I am a carrier-pigeon.”

“If you were,” he replied, “you would have returned the peck I gave you a little while ago.”

“Oh, very well, sir, I will return it now; we won’t quarrel about such a trifle. See, the day is breaking and the storm begins to subside. For pity’s sake let

me go with you ! I am lost, I have nothing left in this world ; if you refuse, there is nothing for me but to drown myself in this spout."

" Very well, let us be off ; follow me, if you can."

I turned a last look towards the garden where my mother was sleeping ; a tear stole from my eye, but the wind and rain swept it away ; I spread my wings and set forth.

My wings, as I have said, were not yet very strong. While my guide was going like the wind, I was panting on beside him. I held out for some time, but at length was seized with such violent dizziness that I was on the point of falling.

" Have we much further to go ? " I asked, in a feeble voice.

" No," he answered : " we are at Bourget, we have only sixty leagues more."

I tried to take courage, not wishing to seem faint-hearted, and flew on for another quarter of an hour, but at last I was spent.

" Sir," I gasped again, " couldn't we stop a minute ? I am horribly thirsty, and if we could but perch upon a tree " —

" Go to the devil, you are nothing but a blackbird," answered the pigeon in disgust ; and he went on his way in a rage, without deigning to turn his head. As for me, I dropped stupefied and blinded into a corn-field.

I do not know how long my fainting fit lasted ;

when I came to my senses my first thought was the parting speech of the pigeon: "You are nothing but a blackbird," quoth he.

"Oh my dear parents!" methought, "then you were mistaken after all! I will return to you; you will acknowledge me as your true and lawful child, and restore me to my place in that snug little heap of leaves under my mother's porringer!"

I tried to rise, but the fatigue of the journey and the pain of my fall had paralyzed my limbs; I had hardly got upon my feet when my weakness returned, and I fell back upon my side.

The awful thought of death was coming upon me, when I saw two charming creatures approaching on tip-toe, through the poppies and blue-bottles. One was a little magpie, very prettily marked and extremely coquettish; the other, a rose-colored turtle-dove. The turtle paused at some distance, with an air of modest compassion; but the magpie came nearer, hopping along in the prettiest way imaginable.

"Bless me! my poor child," she exclaimed in a gay, silvery voice, "what are you doing there?"

"Alas, *madame la marquise*," I replied, for I took her for a marchioness at least, "I am a poor devil of a traveller, who has been left behind by his postillion, and I am dying of hunger."

"Holy Virgin! Is it possible!" she returned, and immediately began to fly hither and thither among the bushes, coming and going in every direction, bringing

a quantity of berries and fruit, of which she made a little heap near me, and continuing her questions the whole time.

“ But who are you ? where do you come from ? what an extraordinary accident ! Where were you going ? travelling by yourself, too, at your age, for I see you are but just over your first moulting ! What are your parents about ? where do they live ? how could they let you go about in such a condition ? Why, it is enough to make one’s feathers stand on end ! ”

While she was talking I had raised myself a little on one side and was eating with great appetite ; the dove remained motionless, gazing at me with eyes full of pity. She noticed that I turned my head languidly, and guessed that I was thirsty. A rain-drop that had fallen during the night, was hanging on a spray of chickweed ; she shyly took it up in her beak and brought it to me quite fresh. Certainly, had I not been so ill, a lady of such reserve would never have gone so far.

I did not quite know the meaning of love, but my heart beat violently ; though divided between two emotions, I was conscious of an inexplicable charm. My caterer was so gay, my cup-bearer so gentle and kind, that I would fain have breakfasted in this way to all eternity. Unfortunately everything has a limit, even the appetite of a convalescent. The repast being ended, and my strength restored, I satisfied the little magpie’s curiosity, and told her my misfortunes as frankly as

I had done to the pigeon the evening before. The magpie listened to me with more attention than she had seemed capable of, and the dove betrayed her exquisite sensibility in the most touching way. But when I came to the grand cause of my unhappiness, my ignorance as to who or what I was —

“Are you in earnest?” cried the magpie. “You a blackbird? you a pigeon? Nonsense, you are a magpie, my dear child, if ever there was one, and a very pretty magpie,” she added, giving me a little blow with her wing, as though she were tapping me with her fan.

“But, *madame la marquise*,” I answered, “it strikes me that for a magpie my color — begging your pardon” —

“A Russian magpie, my dear ; you are a Russian pie. Don’t you know that they are white ? Poor boy, what innocence !”

“But,” I returned, “how can I be a Russian magpie since I was born in an old porringer in the heart of the Marais ?”

“Ah ! the babe ! You date from the invasion, my dear ; do you suppose that you are the only one ? Trust yourself with me and come along. I will take you where you shall see some of the finest things the world contains.”

“And where is that, madam ?”

“To my green palace, my pet ; you shall see the life we lead there. Before you have been a magpie for a quarter of an hour you will not hear of being any-

thing else. There are about a hundred of us, not like those big, common magpies who beg on the highways ; *we* are all high-born and well-bred, slender, nimble, and but a span long. We all have exactly seven black marks and five white ones, neither more nor less ; it is invariable with us and we despise everybody else. It is true you have not the black marks, but your being a Russian will suffice to gain you admission. Our life consists of two things, chattering and dressing ourselves ; from morning until noon we make ourselves smart, from noon until evening we gossip. We each inhabit a tree, the highest and oldest we can find. In the midst of the forest towers an immense oak, but alas ! it is uninhabited. It was the abode of our late King Pius the Tenth ; <sup>1</sup> we often make pilgrimages thither with many sighs, but except for this little grief we pass the time wonderfully well. Our wives are not prudes, and our husbands are not jealous, but our pleasures are pure and refined, because our hearts are as noble as our tongues are lively and free. Our pride is unbounded ; and if by chance a jay or any other upstart intrudes among us, we pluck him mercilessly ; nevertheless we are the kindest hearted people in the world, and the finches, tomtits, and swallows who live in our thickets, find us always ready to feed or protect them. There is not a spot on earth where there is more chit-chat and less scandal. Pious old pies who tell their beads all day long are not wanting among us,

<sup>1</sup> A pun in the original, *Pie X.*

but the airiest of our young beauties may approach the strictest of our dowagers without fear of a peck. In short, we live for pleasure, honor, gossip, glory, and dress."

"All this is delightful, madam," I replied, "and I should be certainly very ungallant not to obey the command of a lady of your distinction. But before I have the honor of following you, pray permit me to say one word to this kind young lady. *Mademoiselle*," I continued, addressing the dove, "be candid with me, I entreat: do you really think that I am a Russian pie?"

At this question the turtle-dove let her head droop, and turned pale pink, like Lolotte's ribbons.

"But, *monsieur*," she said; "I do not know that I ought" —

"In heaven's name, speak, *mademoiselle*! I have not a thought which could offend you; quite the contrary. You are both so lovely that I here vow to offer my heart and claw to whichever of you will accept them, the moment that I know whether I am a magpie or something else, — for when I look at you," I added in rather a lower tone to the young lady, "I am conscious of something of the turtle-dove, which agitates me strangely."

"Why really," replied the dove, blushing still more deeply, "I do not know whether it may not be only the effect of the sun shining upon you through those poppies, but your plumage does seem to have a slight tinge" — She could not venture to say more.

"What a dilemma!" I exclaimed. "How shall I know what to do? How can I give my heart to either of you when it is so cruelly divided? Oh Socrates! what an admirable precept you gave us, but how hard a one to follow, when you said, 'Know thyself.'"

I had not tried my voice since the day that an unlucky song had irritated my father to such a degree. At this juncture it occurred to me to make use of it, as a means of discovering the truth.

"By Jove!" thought I, "as my respected father turned me out of the house on my first verse, the second cannot fail to produce an effect of some sort on these ladies!" Having begun by a polite bow, as if to crave indulgence on account of my ducking, I began to chirp, then to warble, then to trill, and finally to sing at the top of my lungs, like a Spanish muleteer in the open air.

As I sang, the little magpie withdrew further and further from me, with an air of surprise which changed to stupefaction, and gradually gave place to an expression of alarm, combined with utter weariness: she circled round me like a cat round a bit of hot fat, which has just burned her, but which she is still longing to taste. Seeing the effect of my test, and wishing to push it to the utmost, the more bored the poor marchioness looked, the louder and longer I sang. She stood my melodious efforts for twenty-five minutes, and then, able to bear it no longer, flew away in great commotion and took refuge in her green palace

As to the turtle-dove, she had been fast asleep almost from the first.

"Wonderful effects of melody!" thought I. "Oh Marais! Oh parental porringer! I am more determined than ever to go back to you."

Just as I was about to take flight, the turtle opened her eyes.

"Adieu, charming and tedious stranger," she said; "my name is Gourouli, do not forget me!"

"Beautiful Gourouli," I replied, "you are good, gentle, and lovely: I would fain live and die for you, but you are rose-colored: such happiness is not for me."

The melancholy result of my strains saddened me still more. "Oh music! song!" I said to myself as I turned toward Paris, "how few souls there are who understand you!"

While sunk in these reflections, I bumped my head against that of a bird, who was flying in the opposite direction. The shock was so sudden and severe that we both fell upon the top of a tree, which, by good luck, happened to be at hand. After we had shaken ourselves a little, I looked at the new-comer, expecting a quarrel. I saw with surprise that he was white. His head indeed was a little larger than mine, and he had a sort of a crest upon his forehead which gave him a mock-heroic air, besides which he carried his tail very high, with great dignity. However, he did not appear in the least anxious for a fight. We addressed

each other with extreme courtesy, and exchanged mutual apologies, after which we fell into conversation.

I took the liberty of inquiring his name and country.

"I am surprised that you do not know me," he replied. "Are you not one of us?"

"To tell the truth, my dear sir," I answered, "I do not know who I am. Everybody asks me the same question and gives me the same answer; it must be a practical joke."

"It is you who jest," he returned. "You wear your plumage too well for me not to recognize one of us. You undoubtedly belong to that ancient and illustrious race called *cacuota* in Latin, *kakatoës* in the language of the learned, and in common parlance, the cockatoo."

"By Jove! *monsieur*, perhaps I do, and it would be a great privilege. But suppose for a moment that I do not, and deign to tell me whom I have the honor of addressing?"

"I am the great poet Kacatogan," replied the stranger. "I have made long voyages, arid pilgrimages, and weary peregrinations. I did not begin rhyming yesterday; my muse has had many sorrows. I hummed under Louis XVI. and bawled for the Republic; I have sung the Empire in lofty strains, and discreetly warbled the praises of the Restoration. Even in these latter times I have made an effort — not without difficulty — to conform to the exactions of an age

without taste ; I have scattered broadcast pointed epigrams, sublime hymns, graceful dithyrambics, pious elegies, dishevelled dramas, beringletted novels, powdered vaudevilles, and bald tragedies. In short, I flatter myself that I have added some graceful garlands, some sombre battlements, and some ingenious arabesques, to the temple of the Muses. But what then ? I have grown old. Still I make verses vigorously, and just now when you gave me that bump on the forehead I was composing a poem which would not have been less than six pages long. But if I can be of any use to you I am entirely at your service."

" Really, my dear sir," I replied, " you can, for I am in a grand poetical difficulty at this very moment. I do not presume to call myself a poet, still less a great poet like you," I added, with a bow, " but Nature has given me a throat which itches when I feel happy or sad. I confess that I am utterly ignorant of all rules " —

" I have forgotten them," responded Kacotogan, grandly. " That is of no moment."

" But," I resumed, " I am unfortunate in one respect ; my voice produces the same effect upon my hearers as that of a certain Jean de Nivelles upon — you remember " —

" I do," replied Kacotogan : " I have had this odd experience myself. The cause is unknown to me, but the effect is undeniable."

" Well, as you seem to be the Nestor of poetry, may I ask if you know any help for the difficulty ? "

"No," said Kacotogan, "I have never been able to find one. It used to annoy me excessively, when I was younger, always to be hissed, but now a days I do not give it a thought. I am of opinion that this indifference on the part of the public arises from their reading other authors ; it distracts them."

"I agree with you, *monsieur*, but you will admit that it is hard for a well-meaning creature to put everybody to flight the moment he has an inspiration. Would you do me the favor to listen to me and tell me honestly what you think ?"

"With pleasure," said Kacotogan ; "I am all ears."

I began to sing at once, and had the satisfaction of seeing that Kacotogan neither flew away nor fell asleep. He looked at me fixedly, and from time to time inclined his head with an air of approbation, and made a sort of flattering murmur. But I soon perceived that he was not listening, and that he was thinking of his own poem. Taking advantage of a moment when I stopped to breathe, he interrupted me.

"I have found my rhyme !" he exclaimed, smiling and nodding : "it is the sixty-thousand-seven-hundred-and-fourteenth which has issued from this brain ! And they dare to say I am growing old ! I will read that to my kind friends ; yes, I will read it to them, and we shall see what they have to say !"

So saying, he took wing and disappeared, not even seeming to recollect my existence.

Solitary and disappointed, I saw nothing for me to

do but to make the best of my way back to Paris by the remaining daylight. Unfortunately, I did not know the way. My journey with the pigeon had been too far from pleasant to leave me a distinct recollection of the route, so that, instead of going straight on, I turned to the left, near Bourget, and being overtaken by night was obliged to seek a lodging in the woods of Morfontaine.

Everybody was going to bed when I arrived. The magpies and jays, who, as all the world knows, are the worst sleepers on earth, were wrangling on every side; the sparrows chirped in the bushes as they walked over each other; two herons paced gravely along the edge of the water in a meditative attitude upon their long stilts, the Georges Dandins of the place, waiting patiently for their wives. Enormous crows rested heavily on the highest tree-tops, sleepily droning out their evening prayer. Lower down, amorous tomtits pursued each other through the thicket; while a blowzy woodpecker was pushing her family from behind to make them go into a hollow tree. Phalanxes of hedge-sparrows came in from the fields, dancing in the air like puffs of smoke, and alighting upon the bushes, which they covered in a swarm; linnets, larks, and robins, hung along the bare branches like crystals on a chandelier. The woods rang with voices calling "Come, wife! Come, daughter! Come, my beauty! This way, my darling! Here I am, my dear! Good-night, my love! Farewell, friends! Go to sleep, children!"

What a night's lodging for a bachelor! I was tempted to join some birds of my own size and entreat their hospitality. "All birds are gray by night," thought I: "besides what harm can there be in roosting decorously near some of them?"

I went first towards a ditch where some starlings had collected. They were making their toilette for the night with remarkable care, and I noticed that most of them had gilded wings and varnished claws. They were the dandies of the forest, pretty good fellows, but they did not honor me with the slightest attention. Their conversation, however, was so frothy; they recounted their love-affairs and affairs of honor with so much self-complacency, and nudged each other to such a degree, that I found it impossible to remain there.

I perched next upon a branch along which half a dozen birds of different kinds had strung themselves. I modestly took the lowest place, at the very end of the bough, hoping to be tolerated. Unluckily, my next neighbor was an old dove, as dry as a rusty weather-cock. As I approached, she was absorbed by the small remnant of feathers which covered her bones, and was pretending to plume herself; but far too much afraid of losing a single one, she merely reviewed them all to be sure that she had her full number. I scarcely brushed her with the tip of my wing, but she drew herself up majestically.

"What are you about?" she inquired, pursing up

her beak with Britannic prudery. And giving me a great shove, she knocked me down with a vigor worthy of a porter. I fell into a tuft of heath where a fat quail was asleep. My own mother in her porringer had not an air of more perfect beatitude: she was so plump and puffy, comfortably seated on her double chin, that she might have been mistaken for a game pie, with all the crust eaten off. I gently slipped close to her. "She will not wake," I thought to myself, "and at any rate such a good, fat, motherly body cannot be very cross." Nor was she; she half opened her eyes and said, with a slight sigh, —

"You make me uncomfortable, my little fellow; do go away."

At the same instant I heard myself called: some thrushes on a bush were making signs to me to come up to them. "Here are some kind souls at last," thought I. They made room for me, laughing like mad creatures, and I slid into their feathery group as deftly as a love-letter into a muff. But I soon perceived that these ladies had eaten more grapes than were good for them; they could scarcely balance themselves on the branches, and their broad jokes, shouts of laughter, and coarse songs soon drove me away.

I began to grow desperate, and was going to roost in a solitary nook, when a nightingale began to sing. There was universal silence. Oh! how pure his voice was! how sweet his very melancholy! Far from dis-

turbing the slumbers of others, his notes seemed to lull them. No one dreamed of stopping him, no one found fault with him for singing his song at such an hour ; his father did not beat him, nor his friends run away from him.

“ Then it is only I,” I cried, “ who am forbidden to be happy ! Let me begone, let me fly from this cruel company ! Better to seek my way through the shades of night at the risk of being devoured by an owl, than be made desperate by the spectacle of others’ happiness.”

With this resolve I resumed my journey and wandered about at random for a long while, but the first peep of day showed me the towers of Notre Dame. I reached it in a second and looked about for some time before I perceived our garden. I flew thither quick as lightning — alas, it was deserted ! In vain I called my parents ; nobody answered. The tree my father frequented, the maternal bush, the beloved porringer, had all disappeared ; the axe had destroyed everything ; naught remained of the shrubbery where I was born but a bundle of fagots.

At first I sought my parents in all the neighboring gardens, but it was labor lost : no doubt they had taken refuge in some distant quarter of the city, and I never heard of them again.

Overcome with distress, I perched on the spout whither my father’s anger had first driven me. There I passed long days and nights in bewailing my sad

fate ; I could not sleep, I could hardly eat ; I was ready to die of sorrow.

One day, while grieving as usual, I said aloud, " So I am not a blackbird, for my father pecked me ; nor a pigeon, for I dropped on the road when I tried to go to Belgium ; nor a Pussian magpie, for the little marchioness stopped her ears when I opened my mouth ; nor a turtle-dove, since Gourouli, the gentle Gourouli, snored like a monk while I sang ; nor a parroquet, as Kacotogan would not condescend to listen to me ; nor, in short, any sort of bird whatever, as they all let me sleep by myself at Morfontaine. And yet I have feathers on my body ; here are my wings ; I am not a monster, — witness Gourouli, and the little marchioness herself, who liked me well enough. What is the mysterious reason that these feathers, wings, and claws, do not make up a whole to which there is a name ? May I not be " —

I was about to continue my complaint when I was interrupted by two huckster-women quarreling in the street.

" Go to the devil ! " said one of them to the other. " If you ever stop, I will make you a present of a white blackbird."

" Gracious heavens ! " I exclaimed, " here it is at last. Oh Providence ! I am the son of a blackbird, and I am white ! I am a white blackbird ! "

I must admit that this discovery modified my ideas extremely. Instead of bemoaning myself, I began to

bridle and strut up and down the roof, gazing into space with the air of a victor.

"It is no small matter to be a white blackbird," said I to myself. "Such a thing is not to be seen every day. I was simple enough to grieve because I could find nobody like me, — why, mine is the lot of genius! I meant to fly from the world, now I intend to astonish it. As I am that peerless bird whose very existence is denied by the ignorant, I ought to comport myself accordingly, and I will, — like the Phœnix, despising all other fowls. I must buy Byron's poems and the memoirs of Alfieri, which appropriate food will fill me with fitting pride, over and above what God has given me. Yes, I will enhance, if possible, the glory of my birth: Nature has made me rare; I will make myself mysterious. It shall be a favor and honor to behold me, — and indeed," I added in a lower tone, "suppose I were to exhibit myself for money? Fie, unworthy thought! I will write a poem like Kacotogan, not in one canto, but in twenty-four, as all great men do; no, that is not enough, mine shall have forty-eight, with notes and an appendix! The universe must learn that I exist! In my verses I shall not fail to bewail my isolation, but in such a strain, that the happiest will envy me. As Heaven has refused me a mate I will say shocking things of the mates of others; I will prove that everything is sour except my own grapes. The nightingales must take heed to themselves; I will demonstrate as plain-

ly as two and two are four, that their complaints sicken one, and that they deal in paltry artifices. I must go to Charpentier.<sup>1</sup> I must begin by making myself a tremendous literary position. I mean to have a court about me, composed not of newspaper writers only, but of real authors, even including literary women. I will write a play for Mlle. Rachel, and if she refuses to act it, I will proclaim by sound of trumpet that her talent is far inferior to that of some old provincial actress.

“I will go to Venice, and in that fairy city hire the famous Mocenigo Palace, on the banks of the Grand Canal, at the rate of four pounds tenpence a day, and there I shall find inspiration in the memories the author of ‘Lara’ must have left behind. From the depths of my solitude I will flood the world with a deluge of verses in the Spenserian stanza, rhyming alternately, whereby I shall soothe my lofty soul; I will make all the tomtits sigh, the turtles coo, the woodpeckers weep, and the old screech-owls hoot. But as regards myself personally I will be inexorable, and inaccessible to love.

“In vain shall they urge and entreat me to take pity on the unhappy beings who have been overcome by my sublime strophes: to all that, I will answer, ‘Fudge!’ Oh excess of glory! my manuscripts will sell for their weight in gold, my books will traverse oceans: fame and fortune will follow me everywhere; but alone

<sup>1</sup> A well-known publisher.

in a crowd, I shall appear indifferent to its applause : in short, I will be a perfect white blackbird, a regular eccentric genius, praised, petted, admired, and envied, but thoroughly sulky and intolerable."

I took but six weeks to produce my first work. It was, as I had planned, a poem in forty-eight cantos. Of course there were some inaccuracies, owing to my prodigious fluency, but I trusted that the modern public, accustomed to the high literary standard of the weekly newspapers, would not condemn it on that account.

I had a success worthy of myself; that is, unparalleled. The subject of my work was none other than myself: therein I conformed to the fashion of the day. I recounted my past sufferings with winning self-confidence; I admitted the reader to a thousand domestic details of the liveliest interest; the description of my mother's porringer alone occupied not less than fourteen cantos. I enumerated its grooves, holes, protuberances, cracks, splinters; nails, and stains; its various hues and tints; I described it within and without, the edges, the bottom, the sides, the flat surfaces, and the round surfaces. Passing to the contents, I depicted the blades of grass, straws, dry leaves, bits of wood, gravel, drops of water, dead flies, and beetles' claws. It was a masterly description. But you must not suppose that I gave it entire, — there are shallow readers who would have skipped it; I skillfully divided and interwove it with the narrative in such wise that

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none of it might be lost ; so that at the most interesting and dramatic point of the story, fifteen pages of the porringer were suddenly introduced. This I believe to be one of the great secrets of the art, and as I am not avaricious, whoever wishes to profit by it may do so.

All Europe was thrown into excitement by the appearance of my book : they devoured the revelations which I deigned to make public. How could it be otherwise ? I not only mentioned every fact of my personal history, but I gave the world a complete picture of all the fancies which had passed through my brain since I was two months old. I even introduced, at one of the finest passages, an ode composed while I was in the shell. Meanwhile, of course, I did not neglect to touch upon the great subject which now occupies so many minds, — the future of the human race. This problem had struck me as interesting, and in a leisure moment I dashed off a solution of it which was generally considered satisfactory.

Every day came complimentary verses, letters of congratulation, and anonymous declarations of love. With regard to visits I adhered to the rule I had laid down ; my door was closed to every one. I could not refuse, however, to receive two strangers who presented themselves as relations of mine. One was a blackbird from Senegal, the other from China.

“ Oh my dear sir,” they exclaimed, smothering me in their embraces, “ what a great bird you are ! how

well you have described, in your immortal poem, the anguish of unrecognized genius. If we had not been already entirely misunderstood, we should have become so upon reading your book. How we sympathize with your griefs, with your sublime contempt for the vulgar herd! We, too, know from experience the secret sorrows you have sung. Here are two sonnets we have composed together, and which we beg you to accept."

"And here," added the Chinaman, "is a piece of music which my wife composed on a passage in your preface. It renders the meaning marvelously."

"Gentlemen," I said, "as far as I can judge, you appear to be endowed with great hearts and luminous intellects. But permit me to ask one question? Whence proceeds your melancholy?"

"Why, only look at me!" replied the native of Senegal. "My plumage, it is true, is handsome, and shows that rich green which glimmers on the duck, but my bill is too short and my feet too large; and see how my tail disfigures me! it is a third longer than my entire body. Is not that enough to drive me to the bad?"

"And I," continued the Chinaman, "am still more unfortunate; my friend's tail sweeps the ground, but the street-boys make fun of me, because I have none at all."

"Gentlemen," I replied, "I pity you from my soul; it is always annoying to have either too much or too

little, no matter of what. But allow me to inform you that at the *Jardin des Plantes* there are a number of stuffed specimens like yourselves, who have been there very contentedly for a long time. Being discontented, no more makes a blackbird a genius than being disreputable makes a literary woman a clever authoress. I am alone of my kind and I mourn over it : perhaps I ought not to do so, but it is my prerogative. I am white, gentlemen ; when you become so, we shall hear what you have to say."

Notwithstanding my resolution, and the calm which I affected, I was not happy. My isolation, though glorious, was none the less painful, and I could not think, without dismay, of being compelled to pass my entire life in celibacy. The return of spring, especially, caused me mortal discomfort, and I was again relapsing into a state of melancholy when an unforeseen event decided my future.

It is needless to say that my writings had crossed the Channel, and that the English had snapped them up with the greatest avidity. The English snap up everything except what they understand. One day I received a letter from London, signed by a young lady blackbird.

"I have read your poem," she said, "and my admiration for it has determined me to offer myself to you. Heaven created us for one another ; I am like you, I am a white blackbird !"

My surprise and joy may easily be imagined. "A

white blackbird!" I said to myself; "can it be possible? Then I am no longer alone upon earth!" I lost no time in replying to the fair unknown in a manner which proved how much her proposal delighted me. I urged her to come to Paris or to permit me to fly to her. She replied that she would rather come to me, because her relations bored her; she was settling her affairs, and I should soon see her.

A few days afterwards she arrived. Oh rapture! she was the prettiest little blackbird in this world, and even whiter than myself.

"Ah, *mademoiselle!*" I exclaimed, "or rather *madame*, for from this moment I consider you as my lawful spouse, how could so lovely a creature be in existence and her fame not reach me sooner? Blessed be the sorrows I have known and the pecks my father gave me, since Heaven had such unlooked for consolation in store! Until this day I deemed myself doomed to eternal solitude, and to tell the truth, it was a heavy burden to bear. But as I gaze on you, I feel that I possess all the qualities of the father of a family. Accept my hand without delay; let us be married quietly in the English fashion and start at once for Switzerland."

"That is not my idea," replied the young lady blackbird; "I wish our wedding to be magnificent, and all the well-born blackbirds in France to be present. People like ourselves owe it to our own dignity not to be married like cats on a roof. I have

brought a supply of bank-notes. Send out the invitations, go to your tradespeople, and do not stint the refreshments."

I yielded blindly to the wishes of my white blackbird. Our wedding was celebrated with overwhelming splendor; ten thousand flies were eaten at it. We received the nuptial benediction from the Rev. Father Cormoran, Archbishop *in partibus*. The day closed with a beautiful ball; in short, my happiness was complete.

The more I studied the character of my lovely wife the more I adored her. She united in her little person every attraction of mind and body. She was a thought prudish, but I ascribed that to the influence of the English fogs, in which she had always lived, and felt no doubt that this trifling defect would soon vanish in the climate of France.

What annoyed me more seriously was a sort of mystery in which she sometimes enveloped herself with singular rigidity, locking herself up for hours with her attendants, at her toilet, as she said. Husbands are not fond of these vagaries in their homes. At least twenty different times did I knock at my wife's door without being admitted. This annoyed me extremely. One day I insisted upon coming in with so much irritation that she was forced to yield, and open the door, not without many complaints of my impatience. As I entered, I noticed a large bottle full of a sort of paste made of flour and Spanish white.

I asked my wife what she did with this mixture ; she replied that it was an opiate for chillblains, from which she suffered.

This opiate struck me as a little suspicious, but how could I mistrust so sweet and excellent a being, who had given herself to me with so much enthusiasm and such perfect trust.

I did not know at first that my beloved was literary, but after some time she confessed it, and even went so far as to show me the manuscript of a novel in which she had imitated both Sir Walter Scott and Scarron. I leave you to imagine the pleasure of this discovery. I was not only the possessor of a creature of incomparable beauty, but I found that my fair companion's intellect was in every way worthy of my own. From that moment we worked together. While I was composing my poems she covered reams of paper. I recited my verses aloud, which did not the least interfere with her writing. She produced novels with a facility almost equal to my own, always choosing the most dramatic subjects, parricide, murder, rape, and even picking pockets, but never omitting a passing attack upon the government or failing to preach the emancipation of female blackbirds. In a word, no flight was above her talent, no expedient too much for her delicacy ; she was never obliged to erase a line nor to sketch her plan beforehand. She was the type of the literary lady blackbird.

One day, as she was working with even more than

wanted ardor, I noticed that she perspired profusely, and was astonished to observe a large black spot on her back.

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed. "What is the matter? are you ill?"

At first she seemed a little frightened and confused, but her constant contact with the world enabled her to regain the admirable self-command which was habitual with her. She told me that it was an ink spot, and that she was very subject to it in moments of inspiration.

"Is my wife changing her color?" I asked myself. The thought banished sleep. The bottle of paste recurred to me. "Oh heavens!" I cried, "what a suspicion! If this celestial creature should prove to be but a painted image, mere stucco? could she have varnished herself to impose upon me? While I dreamed that I was pressing to my heart the sister of my soul, the privileged being created for me alone, can it be I have wedded nothing but flour?"

I laid a plan to dispel the horrible doubt by which I was haunted. I bought a barometer and waited anxiously for it to foretell a rainy day. I meant to choose a threatening Sunday, and take my wife into the country to try the test of a ducking. But we were in mid-July, and the weather was hopelessly fine.

My recent happiness, and the habit of writing, had excited my sensibilities extremely. I was so emotional that in composing I sometimes found my feelings over-

power my ideas, and wept while seeking a rhyme. My wife was very fond of these occasions; all masculine weakness is gratifying to feminine pride.

One night, as I was polishing a line, according to the precepts of Boileau, my heart was opened.

"Oh thou my best and only love!" I exclaimed to my dear blackbird. "Thou without whom my life is a vain dream! Thou whose glance, whose smile metamorphose the universe for me; life of my heart! dost know how I love thee? To clothe in verse a commonplace thought which has been already used by others demands only a little study and practice, but where shall I find language to express the feelings with which thy beauty inspires me? Can even the memory of my past sorrows furnish me with words to paint my present joy? Before thou camest to me, my solitude was that of an orphan and an exile; now it is that of a monarch. In this frail form, whose counterpart is mine until death shall annihilate us,—in this fevered little brain, fermenting with idle thoughts, dost thou know, Oh my angel! dost thou divine, Oh my beautiful one! that naught can exist in which thou hast not a part? List to the utterances of my brain, and guess how much my love exceeds them! Oh that my genius were a pearl, and thou wert Cleopatra!"

While thus descanting, I wept over my wife, and she changed color visibly. At every tear that fell from my eyes, a feather appeared which was not even

black, but rusty brown ; my belief is that she had lost her original color some time before. After some moments of emotion, I found myself confronting an unpasted, defloured fowl, in no wise different from the commonest and meanest of blackbirds !

What could I say ? what could I do ? what position could I take ? Reproaches were useless. It is true I could have considered the case as rehibitory, and annulled my marriage, but how could I publish my own shame ? Was not my misfortune great enough already ? I plucked up my courage, resolved to quit the world, abandon the career of letters, if possible bury myself in a desert, to shun the face of every living creature, and like Alceste, to seek

— “ some refuge hidden,  
Where to be a white blackbird is not forbidden.”

Still weeping I flew away, and the wind, which plays the part of chance in the life of birds, bore me to a branch in the forest of Morfontaine. This time everybody had gone to bed.

“ What a marriage ! ” I said to myself. “ What a mischance ! It was certainly with the best motives that the poor child plastered herself with white, but I am none the less to be pitied, nor is she the less rusty.”

The nightingale was still singing alone in the depth of night ; he rejoiced with his whole soul in the gift of God which raises him so far above the poet, and poured forth his heart to the surrounding silence. I could not resist the temptation of accosting him.

"How fortunate you are," I said; "you not only can sing as much as you like, and very well too, and everybody listens to you, but you have a wife and children, your nest, your friends, a soft pillow of moss, a full moon, and no reviewers. Rubini and Rossini cannot be compared to you: you surpass the one, and interpret the other. I too have sung, but it was a poor business. I was mustering phrases and ranging words in order of battle, like Prussian soldiers, while you were in the woods. Will you tell me your secret?"

"Yes," replied the nightingale, "but it will not be what you expect. I am tired of my wife, I do not care for her: I am in love with the rose: Saadi the Persian has sung of us. I strain my throat the live-long night for her, but she sleeps and does not hear me; her calyx is closed round an old beetle whom she is cradling to sleep, and to-morrow morning, when I go to rest, worn out with grief and fatigue, she will unfold it that a bee may feed upon her heart."

# MIMI PINSON.

## PROFILE SKETCH OF A GRISETTE.



### CHAPTER I.

AMONG the students who attended the lectures at the Medical School last year, was a young man named Eugene Aubert. He was rather over nineteen, and well-born. His parents, who lived in the country, made him a small allowance, which, however, he found sufficient. He led a quiet life, and was considered very amiable. His classmates were fond of him; they always found him good-humored and obliging, with an open hand and heart. The only thing of which they could complain was a strange tendency to dreaminess and seclusion, and such excessive delicacy of language and conduct that he had gained the nickname of *the little girl*, an appellation at which he himself laughed, and to which his friends attached no offensive meaning, knowing that he was brave enough on occasion; but his mode of life certainly justified the name, especially by contrast with that of his companions. He was always foremost when there was work to be done, but if there was a party of pleasure on foot, a dinner at the *Moulin de Beurre*, or a dance at the Casino, the

*little girl* shook his head and retreated to his lodgings. But what marked him as almost preternatural among medical students, was not only his having no mistress, — though his age and appearance guaranteed him success, — but that nobody had ever seen him flirting across a counter with a *grisette*, an honored custom of the *Quartier Latin* from time immemorial.

The beauties of the *Mont Ste. Geneviève*, who share the homage of the students, inspired him with an aversion amounting to repugnance. He looked upon them as a distinct race, ungrateful, dangerous, and depraved, born to cause evil and misfortune in return for enjoyment. “Beware of those women,” he was wont to say, “they are like dolls of red-hot iron.” Unfortunately, he had but too many arguments to justify his detestation. It was but too easy to cite the quarrels, excesses, and sometimes utter ruin resulting from these transient connections which borrow the semblance of happiness; it is this year as it was last, and will probably be the same next year too.

It is needless to say that Eugene’s friends teased him continually about his morality and scruples.

“What do you make out?” his friend Marcel, who affected to be a free liver, used to ask him; “what can you prove by a single slip, or a mishap once in a way?”

“That we should refrain altogether, lest it should happen again,” was Eugene’s reply.

“Bad reasoning,” returned Marcel: “your argu-

ment is like a card house, which tumbles down if one side gives way. What is there in it all to make a serious matter of? If one of us loses at cards, is that a reason why the rest should turn monk? If another has not a penny left, and a third has to dine on bread and water, why should Eliza lose her appetite? Who's to blame if your gay neighbor pawns his watch to be able to go and break his arm at Montmorency? your fair neighbor hasn't lost *her* arm. You fight a duel about Rosalie and are wounded; she turns her back upon you; well, what of that? her waist is none the less slim. These are but the little accidents of existence, and not so frequent as you fancy. How many happy couples you see on a fine Sunday in the *cafés*, the parks, the tea-gardens. Look at the great bulging omnibuses stuffed with grisettes going to Ranelagh and Belleville. Count those who sally forth of a holiday from the *Quartier St. Jacques* alone; the battalions of milliners, the armies of seamstresses, the hosts of women who sell tobacco; they all enjoy themselves, have their love affairs, and flock to the arbors in the suburbs of Paris like flights of sparrows. If it is rainy, they go to the play, where they eat oranges and weep, for they eat a great deal, it must be confessed, and also cry easily, which is a proof of a tender heart. And if, after sewing, basting, hemming, quilting, and darning the whole week long, on Sunday these poor girls give us a practical sermon on forgetfulness of our troubles and love for our neighbor, where's the harm? and what

can a decent fellow, who has spent his week in dissecting objects which are far from agreeable, do better than clear his sight a little by looking at a rosy face, a neat ankle, and the beauties of nature?"

"Whited sepulchres," Eugene would reply.

"I assert and I will maintain," continued Marcel, "that a great deal could and should be said in defense of grisettes, and that a moderate use of them is good. In the first place, they are modest, for they spend the whole day in manufacturing the garments most indispensable to decency; in the next place, they are well conducted, for there is no head of a plain-sewing or of any other establishment, who does not enjoin upon her shop-women to be civil to everybody; thirdly, they are extremely neat and clean, seeing that they have constantly white linen or muslin in their hands, which they dare not soil on pain of being paid less; in the fourth place, they are sincere, for they drink ratafia; fifthly, they are frugal and economical, because they have great trouble in earning thirty cents, and if they are sometimes greedy and extravagant it is never with their own money; sixthly, they are very gay, because the work on which they are occupied is for the most part deadly dull, and as soon as it is finished they are as frisky as fish. Another recommendation is that they are not troublesome, inasmuch as passing their lives nailed to a chair from which they dare not budge, they cannot run after their lovers like fine ladies. Then they are not great talkers, because they are

obliged to count their stitches. They do not spend much on their shoes, for they do not walk much, nor on their dress, because their credit is not large. If they may be accused of inconstancy, it is not on account of the bad novels they read nor their own natural depravity ; it is due to the great number of people who pass their shop windows ; and on the other hand, the proof that they are capable of a real passion is the great number of them who daily throw themselves into the Seine or out of the window, or asphyxiate themselves in their room. It is true that they have the inconvenient peculiarity of always being hungry and thirsty, owing to their extreme temperance, but it is notorious that they are satisfied with a glass of beer and a cigar by way of a meal, a precious quality rarely to be found in domestic life. In short, I maintain that they are good-natured, amiable, faithful, and disinterested, and that it is to be regretted when they end in the hospital."

It was generally at the *café*, when his head was a little heated, that Marcel discoursed thus ; then he would fill his friend's glass and insist on his drinking the health of Mademoiselle Pinson, a little needle-woman who lived near them, but Eugene would take his hat and slip quietly away while Marcel continued to hold forth to his companions.

## CHAPTER. II.

MADemoiselle PINSON was not exactly what one calls a pretty woman. There is a wide difference between a pretty woman and a pretty grisette. If a pretty woman, acknowledged and pronounced to be so by Parisian verdict, were to take it into her head to put on a little cap, a chintz dress, and a black silk apron, she must needs look like a pretty grisette. But if a grisette were to dress herself up in a bonnet, a velvet cloak, and a dress from Worth's, she would by no means necessarily be a pretty woman ; on the contrary it is probable that she would look like a clothes-peg, and no blame to her. The difference lies in the circumstances of these two creatures, and chiefly in the little bit of buckram covered with some sort of stuff and called a bonnet, which women think fit to tie over their ears a little like the blinkers of a horse ; it is to be observed, however, that blinkers prevent horses from looking about, and that the bit of buckram prevents nothing of the sort.

Be this as it may, a little cap requires a turned-up nose, which in its turn demands a well-shaped mouth, with good teeth, and a round face for the frame. A round face requires sparkling eyes, which are best as black as possible, with eyebrows to match. The hair *ad libitum*, for the eyes settle everything else. Such a combination is evidently far from being beautiful,

strictly speaking. It is what is called irregularly pretty, the classic face of the grisette, which might possibly be ugly in the bits of buckram, but which is charming in a cap, and prettier than beauty itself. Such was Mademoiselle Pinson.

Marcel had taken it into his head that Eugene should pay his court to this damsel — wherefore I cannot tell, unless because he himself was the adorer of Mademoiselle Zelia, Mademoiselle Pinson's most intimate friend. It struck him as being a natural and convenient arrangement; he wished to settle matters to suit himself, and make love in a friendly way, as it were. Such plans are not uncommon, and succeed quite often; for ever since the world began, opportunity has been found the strongest of all temptations. Who can tell the real source of our joys and griefs, our attachments and quarrels, our happiness and misery? — a door of communication, a back staircase, an entry, a broken pane.

Some characters, however, draw back from these games of chance. They choose to conquer their enjoyments, not to win them as at a lottery, and are not moved to fall in love because they find themselves next to a pretty woman in a public conveyance. Eugene was one of these, and Marcel knew it, therefore he had long nursed a project, simple enough in itself, but which he thought most ingenious, and infallibly sure to overcome his friend's resistance. He had resolved to give a supper, and decided that

his own birthday was the fittest occasion for it. He ordered two dozen bottles of beer, a large joint of cold veal with salad, an enormous plum-cake, and a bottle of champagne. He first invited two of his fellow-students, then announced to Mademoiselle Zelia that there was to be a frolic at his rooms that evening, and she must bring Mademoiselle Pinson. They were quite sure to be there. Marcel was considered one of the fine gentlemen of the Latin Quarter, one of those whose invitations are not to be declined, and seven o'clock had but just finished striking when the two grisettes knocked at his door. Mademoiselle Zelia was arrayed in a short dress, gray gaiter-boots, and a cap with flowers; Mademoiselle Pinson more quietly attired in a black gown which she always wore, and which they used to say gave her a little Spanish air, of which she was very proud. Both, as you may suppose, were in entire ignorance of their host's designs.

Marcel had too much tact to invite Eugene in advance: he was too sure of a refusal. It was not until the girls had taken their places and the first glass had been emptied, that he excused himself for a few minutes to go and look for another guest, and then turned his steps towards Eugene's lodgings. He found him at work as usual, surrounded by his books. After some passing remarks he began to reproach him gently with studying so hard and never giving himself any relaxation, and at length he pro-

posed a walk. Eugene, who was in fact rather weary, having studied the whole day, assented: the two young men went out together, and after a few turns in the walks of the Luxembourg it was not difficult for Marcel to induce his friend to go home with him.

The two grisettes finding themselves left alone and probably tired of waiting, had begun by making themselves at home; they had taken off their bonnets and shawls, and were humming a quadrille and dancing, not forgetting to do honor to the repast from time to time, by way of testing its quality. Their eyes were already sparkling and their cheeks flushed, as Eugene bowed to them with a mixture of surprise and shyness, and they stopped short, in high spirits and a little out of breath. Owing to his secluded habits, they hardly knew him by sight, and immediately scrutinized him from head to foot with the undaunted curiosity which is the prerogative of their class; they then resumed their song and dance as if nothing had happened. The new comer, a little disconcerted, fell back a few steps, meditating a retreat perhaps, but Marcel, having double-locked the door, threw the key noisily on the table.

"Nobody here yet?" he exclaimed. "Where are our friends? But no matter, we have captured the savage. Ladies, let me present the most virtuous youth in France and Navarre, who has long been very anxious for the honor of your acquaintance, and who is an especial admirer of Mademoiselle Pinson."

The quadrille stopped again ; Mademoiselle Pinson made a little bow and put on her cap.

"Eugene," cried Marcel, "this is my birthday, and these two ladies are good enough to celebrate it with us. I brought you here almost by force, it is true, but I hope you will stay of your own accord if we beg you. It is now almost eight o'clock ; we have time to smoke a pipe while waiting for an appetite."

As he spoke he looked towards Mademoiselle Pinson, who instantly understood him, and bowing a second time, said to Eugene in a sweet voice —

"Yes sir, do stay, we beg of you."

At this moment the two students whom Marcel had invited, knocked at the door. Eugene saw that he could not retreat with a good grace, so resigning himself, he took his seat with the rest.

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### CHAPTER III.

THE supper was long and lively. The gentlemen began by filling the room with smoke, and then drank in porportion to refresh themselves. The ladies did the talking, and regaled the company with remarks, more or less pointed, about their various friends and acquaintances, and adventures, more or less credible, picked up in the back-shops. If the stories were not very probable, they were at least very marvellous. Two lawyer's clerks, so they said, had made twenty

thousand francs by speculating in Spanish funds, and had devoured it in six weeks with two girls from a glove-shop. The son of one of the richest bankers in Paris had offered an opera-box and a country-seat to a well-known sempstress, who had refused them, preferring to take care of her parents and remain true to a salesman at the *Deux-Magots*. A certain person whom they could not name, and whose rank forced him to wrap himself in the deepest mystery, had come *incognito* to visit a girl who embroiders, in the *Passage du Pont Neuf*, and she had been immediately seized by order of the police, put into a post-chaise at midnight, with a pocket-book full of bank-notes, and dispatched to the United States, etc. etc.

“That’s enough,” interposed Marcel. “We have heard that sort of thing before. Zelia is romancing, and as to Mademoiselle Mimi, which is Mademoiselle Pinson’s name among friends, her information is incorrect. Your lawyer’s clerks got nothing but a sprain in clearing a gutter, your banker proffered an orange, and your embroidery-girl, so far from being in the United States, is to be seen every day from twelve to four o’clock, at the alms-house, where she has taken lodgings on account of the rise in provisions.”

Eugene was sitting near Mademoiselle Pinson ; he thought that she turned pale at these last words, which were carelessly uttered. But almost at the same instant she rose, lighted a *cigarette*, and said in a deliberate manner, —

"It is your turn to be silent now! I claim the floor. Since my lord Marcel does not believe fables, I will tell you a true story, *et quorum magna pars fui*."

"You understand Latin?" said Eugene.

"As you hear," replied Mademoiselle Pinson. "I learned this sentence of my uncle, who served under the great Napoleon, and never omitted it before telling us about a battle. If you do not know the meaning, I will tell you for nothing. It means: 'I give you my word of honor.' You must know that last week I went with two of my friends, Blanchette and Rougette, to the Odeon Theatre" —

"Wait till I cut the cake," said Marcel.

"Cut, but listen," replied Mademoiselle Pinson. "Well, I went with Blanchette and Rougette to see a tragedy. Rougette, as you know, has lately lost her grandmother, who left her four hundred francs. We took a box; three students were near us in the pit: these young fellows accosted us, and asked us to supper, on the pretext that we were alone."

"Without preamble?" inquired Marcel. "Upon my word it was very civil. And you declined, I suppose?"

"No sir," replied Mademoiselle Pinson: "we accepted, and at the first *entr'acte*, without waiting for the end of the play, we repaired to Viot's."

"With your cavaliers?"

"With our cavaliers. The waiter began, of course,

by saying that there was nothing left; but we were not to be balked by such a trifle. We ordered them to go into the city and fetch whatever was needed. Rougette took the pen and ordered a regular wedding-supper, — prawns, a sweet omelette, fritters, mussels, whipped eggs, everything that is to be found in sauce-pans. Our young friends' faces grew rather long, it must be confessed" —

"By Jove! so I should think," said Marcel.

"We paid no attention to that. When the supper came we began to play the fine lady. We found nothing good, everything disgusted us, we scarcely tasted a dish before we sent it away and asked for something else. 'Waiter, take that away, it is not eatable; where did you buy such horrible trash?' Our unknown friends wished to eat, but they had no chance. In short, we supped like Sancho, and our anger carried us so far as to break some of the crockery."

"Pretty behavior! and who was to pay?"

"That was the very question the three strangers asked each other. From what they said in a low tone, we gathered that one of them had six francs, the next infinitely less, and the third had nothing but his watch, which he generously pulled out of his pocket. In this state the three unfortunates presented themselves at the counter, in hopes of effecting some compromise. What do you think they were told?"

"That they must go to the lock-up, and you would be kept as security, I suppose," said Marcel.

"You are wrong," replied Mademoiselle Pinson. "Before going up-stairs, Rougette had been on the alert, and everything was paid in advance. Fancy the effect of Viot's response:—'Everything is settled, gentlemen.' Our stranger friends looked at us as three cats never looked at three kings, with a touching stupefaction mingled with emotion. However, we pretended to take no notice of it, but went down stairs and called for a coach. 'My dear marchioness,' said Rougette to me, 'we must take these gentlemen home.' 'Certainly, my dear countess,' I answered. Our poor admirers did not know what to say. You may guess if they were sheepish! they declined our politeness, they would not be taken home, they refused to give their address—no wonder! They were convinced that we were women of rank, and they lived heaven knows where!"

Marcel's friends, the two students, who up to this time had done nothing but smoke and drink in silence, seemed far from pleased with this story. They changed color; perhaps they knew as much as Mademoiselle Pinson of the unlucky supper, for they gave her an uneasy glance, as Marcel said, laughing:

"Name your *incognitos*, Mademoiselle Pinson; there can be no harm, as it happened last week."

"No, indeed!" returned the grisette. "One may hoax a man, but ruin his career—never!"

"You are right," observed Eugene. "And you show more discretion than you are aware of, perhaps. Of all the young men in the various colleges, there is hardly one who cannot look back to some folly or some fault, and yet thence emerges daily all that is most respected and respectable in France : physicians, magistrates" —

"Yes," responded Marcel, "that is true. There are budding peers of France who dine at Flicoteaux's and have not always wherewithal to pay the bill. But," he broke off with a wink, "haven't you seen anything more of your friends?"

"What do you take us for," answered Mademoiselle Pinson, with a serious and almost offended air. "Don't you know Blanchette and Rougette, and do you suppose that I" —

"Well, well, do'nt be angry," said Marcel. "But, after all, this is a pretty adventure. Three hair-brained girls, who probably had nothing to pay for their next day's dinner with, throwing money out of the window for the fun of mystifying three poor devils who couldn't help themselves."

"Why did they ask us to supper?" retorted Mademoiselle Pinson.

## CHAPTER IV.

WITH the plum-cake, the solitary bottle of champagne, which represented the dessert, appeared in all its glory. With the wine came a call for a song.

"I see," said Marcel, "as Cervantes says, I see Zelia coughing, which is a sign that she wishes to sing. But, with the permission of these gentlemen, as I am host, I will beg Mademoiselle Mimi for a stave, if she is not hoarse from telling us that story. Eugene," he continued, "do be a little gallant, drink your fair neighbor's health and ask her on my behalf to sing."

Eugene blushed and obeyed. As Mademoiselle Pinson had not disdained to persuade him to stay, he bowed and said shyly : —

"Yes, *mademoiselle*, do sing, we beg of you."

So saying, he raised his glass, and touched that of the grisette. The collision produced a clear, ringing sound ; Mademoiselle Pinson caught up the note, and prolonged it in a pure, fresh voice.

"Good," she said. "As my wine-glass gives me the *La* I consent. But what shall I sing for you ? I am not a prude, I can assure you, but I don't know any mess-room songs. I don't degrade my memory."

"Yes, yes," interposed Marcel. "You are a model, we know ; go on ; everybody is allowed liberty of conscience."

"Well," returned Mademoiselle Pinson, "I will sing you off-hand some verses which were written to me."

"Attention! Who's the author?"

"My fellow-sempstresses. It is needle-made poetry, so I crave indulgence."

"Has your song a chorus?"

"Of course; what a question!"

"That being the case," said Marcel, "have your knives ready, and beat time with the chorus. Zelia may be excused if she wishes."

"Why so, you rude fellow?" asked Zelia, angrily.

"For good reasons," replied Marcel. "But if you wish to join, here, take this cork, that will be better for our ears and your fair hands."

Marcel arranged the glasses and plates in a circle, and took the head of the table, knife in hand. The two heroes of Rougette's supper, who had cheered up a little, removed the bowl of their pipes that they might beat time with the wooden stems; Eugene was pensive; Zelia pouted. Mademoiselle Pinson took a plate and intimated that she wished to break it; Marcel replied by a gesture of assent, and the songstress, taking the broken bits for castanets, began the verses her comrades had composed for her, with an apology for whatever might seem too flattering to herself.

"Mimi Pinson is a blonde of renown;  
But one gown and cap has she;  
The Grand Turk has surely more!  
Heaven gave her this small store,

Meaning her discreet to be.  
None can pawn Mimi Pinson's only gown.

" Mimi Pinson wears a white rose which grew  
In her heart, its name is glee;  
Merry songs, when she doth sup  
From the bottle she calls up,  
And then we may sometimes see  
Mimi Pinson's only cap all askew.

" Quicker eyes and hands have none in the town;  
The hussars wear out their sleeves  
On her counter all day long;  
But though she does no one wrong  
Each his lesson due receives:  
None must crush Mimi Pinson's only gown.

" Mimi Pinson ne'er may wed; if so hap  
She can live and die a maid  
With her trusty needle still;  
But be sure she never will  
Be by mere good looks betrayed;  
Mimi Pinson has a head in her cap.

" But if some day with orange-blossom crown  
Cupid chance to deck her head,  
Coat of arms, or blazoned crest  
Has she none, but what is best  
For the man whom she will wed; —  
A rare pearl set in Mimi Pinson's gown.

" Mimi Pinson has no taste for clap-trap,  
But unto the very core  
She's republican at heart;  
In the Three Days did her part,  
Lacking sword a bodkin wore; —  
Lucky he who pins his badge to her cap!"

The knives and pipes, nay the very chairs, had resounded duly at the end of each versè. The glasses danced upon the table, and the bottles, which were half empty, tipped about merrily and gave each other little raps on the shoulders.

"And so your young friends composed this song for you?" said Marcel. "Somebody else had a hand in it; it is too complimentary. Give me one of those good old songs where things are called by their names."

And he began in a powerful voice :

"Nanette was not fifteen years old" —

"That will do!" cried Mademoiselle Pinson. "We would rather dance; let us have a waltz. Is there a musician among us?"

"I have all that is necessary," replied Marcel. "Here is a guitar; but," he continued, taking down the instrument, "but my guitar has not all that is necessary; it lack three strings."

"But here is a piano," said Zelia. "Marcel will play for us."

Marcel looked at his mistress as indignantly as if she had accused him of a crime. He did know enough music to play a quadrille, but like many other people, he considered it a species of torture to which he would never willingly submit. Zelia, in betraying him, took her revenge for the speech about the cork.

"Are you crazy?" said Marcel. "You know well enough that the piano is here only for show, and that nobody but you ever disturbs it. Who told you that

I could play for dancing. I can only play the 'Marseillaise' with one finger. Now with Eugene there it's different; that's the fellow who knows how to play! But I wouldn't bore him by asking him, on any account. You are the only one here inconsiderate enough to do such a thing when a man has no chance of escape."

Eugene blushed for the third time, and complied with the request proffered with so much delicacy and diplomacy. He seated himself at the piano, and a quadrille was made up.

It lasted nearly as long as the supper. After the quadrille came a waltz, after the waltz a *galop*, for they dance the *galop* still in the Latin Quarter. The ladies were especially indefatigable, and skipped, and screamed with laughter, at a rate to rouse the whole neighborhood. Before long, Eugene, who was fatigued both by the noise and the late hour, fell into a sort of stupor, though he went on playing mechanically, as postillions doze on the trot. The dancers passed and repassed before him like phantoms in a dream, and as there is no such easy prey to low spirits as an unparticipating spectator of the mirth of others, his habitual melancholy fell upon him.

"Empty gayety!" he thought. "Hollow mirth! Moments which they fancy they snatch from misery! Which of the five people tripping so joyously before me now knows whether they will have enough to pay for their dinner to-morrow, — as Marcel said."

While he was making these reflections Mademoiselle Pinson passed close to him ; he thought he saw her take a bit of cake from the table on the sly while dancing, and slip it quietly into her pocket.

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## CHAPTER V.

DAY was dawning when the party broke up. Eugene walked about the streets for some time before going home, to breathe the fresh morning air. Still pursuing his melancholy train of thought, he hummed, almost unconsciously, the grisette's song : —

“ ‘ But one cap and gown has she.’ ”

“ Is it possible ? ” said he to himself. “ Can indigence reach such a point, and yet wear a merry face, and make fun of itself ? Can one laugh at being without food ? ”

The stolen bit of plum-cake was no doubtful sign. Eugene could not help smiling as he thought of it, though moved with pity. “ And yet,” he thought, “ she took cake, not bread ; perhaps it was only greediness. Who knows ? perhaps she wished to carry home some cake to a neighbor's child ; perhaps it was for some gossiping woman who attends the door and who would tell that she had been out all night, — a cerberus who had to be appeased.”

Eugene, who was taking no note of whither he went,

unconsciously strayed into the labyrinth of little streets behind Bucy Square, where a carriage can hardly pass. Just as he was about to retrace his steps, a pale, haggard woman, wrapped in a shabby dressing-gown, bare-headed and dishevelled, came out of an old house. She seemed to be so weak that she could hardly walk; her knees trembled, she leaned against the walls and appeared anxious to reach a neighboring post where there was a letter-box, to drop in a letter which she held in her hand. Eugene, surprised and alarmed, hastened towards her, asked her where she was going, what she wanted, and whether he could be of no assistance to her. At the same time he extended his arm to support her, for she seemed about to fall. But she silently drew back, with a mixture of pride and alarm. She laid her letter on a post, pointed to the box, and collecting all her strength, said: "There!" then, still steadying herself against the wall, she turned towards the house. Eugene vainly tried to make her take his arm, and to repeat his inquiries; she slowly reëntered the narrow, dark alley whence she had emerged.

Eugene picked up the letter; he walked towards the letter-box, but stopped short. This strange meeting had agitated him so much, he felt so much horror mingled with the keenest compassion, that without giving himself time to reflect, he broke the seal almost involuntarily. It seemed odious and in fact impossible, not to try, by any means in his power, to

sound this mystery. The woman was evidently dying ; was it of disease or hunger ? In either case it must be of wretchedness, Eugene opened the letter, which was addressed to the Baron ——, and was as follows :

“ Read this letter, sir, and for pity’s sake do not refuse my petition. You and you alone can save me. Believe my story, give me help, and you will be doing a good action which will gain you a blessing. I have had a cruel illness, which has robbed me of the little strength and heart I had left. In August I go back to my work ; all that I own has been seized by the people with whom I last lodged, and I am almost certain of finding myself without a shelter by Saturday. I am so afraid of starving to death that this morning I had made up my mind to drown myself, for it is twenty-four hours since I have had anything to eat. When I thought of you I felt a little hope ; I was not mistaken, was I ? Sir, I appeal to you on my knees ; no matter how little you do for me, it will at least give me a few days longer to live. I am afraid to die ; I am only twenty-three years old ! With a little help I might manage to get on till the first of next month. If I knew words to move your pity I would use them, but I can think of nothing. I can only lament my incapacity, for I am afraid you will treat my letter as those do who receive too many such ; you will tear it up without thinking that there is a poor creature who is counting the hours and minutes, hoping that you

will feel it to be too cruel to leave her in suspense. I am sure it is not giving away a *louis*, which is so little to you, that will deter you, and surely nothing is easier than to fold your alms in a paper and address it to '*Mademoiselle Bertin, Rue de l'Eperon.*' I have changed my name since I worked for the shops, for the name I bore then was my mother's. When you go out give it to an errand-boy; I will wait through Wednesday and Thursday, and pray fervently that God may make you merciful.

"Perhaps you will not believe that I am in such destitution, but if you could see me you would be convinced.

ROUGETTE."

If Eugene had been moved in reading these lines, it may easily be imagined that his emotion redoubled when he saw the signature. So it was the very girl who had recklessly squandered her money in parties of pleasure, whom want had now reduced to this depth of misery and to this appeal! Such folly and improvidence were absolutely incredible! yet there could be no doubt, there was the signature, and in the course of the evening, Mademoiselle Pinson had also mentioned the assumed name of her friend Rougette, now called Mademoiselle Bertin. How came it that she was thus suddenly abandoned, without resources, food, almost without shelter? Where were her friends of yesterday while she was dying in some garret of this house? And what sort of house was it where one might die in such a way?

But it was not the moment for conjectures ; it was urgent to give the starving woman help. Eugene began by going to an eating-house which was just open, and buying whatever he could find there. This being done, he set forth for Rougette's lodgings, followed by the waiter. But he was shy of presenting himself so abruptly. The air of pride which he had observed about this poor girl made him fear a repulse, or at least an outbreak of wounded vanity ; how was he to confess that he had read her letter ? On reaching her door he said to the waiter : —

“ Do you know a young woman called Mademoiselle Bertin, who lives in this house ? ”

“ Oh yes, sir ! ” answered the waiter. “ We serve her regularly. But if you are going there, sir, she is not at home. She is out of town at present. ”

“ Who told you so ? ” inquired Eugene.

“ Bless you, sir, the woman who waits on the door. Mademoiselle Rougette likes a good dinner, but she does not like to pay for it. She thinks nothing of ordering roast fowl and lobster, but you have to go more than once for the money ! So we all know well enough about here, when she is at home and when she is not. ”

“ She has come back, ” returned Eugene. “ Go up to her room and leave what you have brought ; if she owes you anything say nothing about it to-day. That is my affair, and I will come back and attend to it. If she wishes to know who sends this, say that it is the Baron —. ”

With these words Eugene went on his way. As he went, he reclosed the letter as well as he could, and dropped it into the post.

"After all," he thought, "Rougette will not refuse the dinner; and if she thinks her note has been answered rather promptly, she can settle that with her baron."

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## CHAPTER VI.

STUDENTS are not in pocket every day, any more than grisettes. Eugene knew well enough that to give an air of probability to the waiter's little fable, he ought to have added the *louis* which Rougette had asked for; but here was the difficulty. *Louis* are not generally current in the *Rue St. Jacques*. Besides, Eugene was pledged to pay the eating-house-keeper, and unfortunately just then his till was no better lined than his pocket. For this reason he turned immediately in the direction of the Pantheon.

In those days there lived in that neighborhood a famous barber, who afterwards became bankrupt, having ruined himself in the process of ruining others. Thither, to the room behind the shop, where usury, wholesale and retail, was secretly practiced, came daily the poor but devil-may-care student, in love perhaps, to borrow at an enormous rate of interest a

few coins, to be spent gayly in the evening and dearly repaid on the morrow. Thither, on the sly, came the grisette, shame-faced and hanging her head, to deposit the shawl or shift she had purchased at a second-hand clothing-house, in exchange for a faded bonnet to wear to a picnic. There young men of good family, who were in need of twenty-five *louis*, gave notes for two or three thousand *francs*. Minors eat up their fortune in advance; giddy youths ruined their families and often their own future. From the titled courtesan whose head is turned by a bracelet, to the needy school-usuer who covets an old book or a mess of pottage, one and all resorted thither as to the waters of the Pactolus, and the usurious barber, so proud both of his customers and his practices that he boasted of them openly, kept the prison at Clichy in lodgers till his own turn came to go thither.

Such was the melancholy expedient to which Eugene, not without repugnance, was about to have recourse, to procure the means of relieving Rougette, or at least to do what he could towards it, for he did not feel confident that the application to the baron would have the desired result. To do him justice, it was very charitable on the part of a student to involve himself in this way for a stranger, but Eugene believed in God: all good actions were to him obligatory.

The first face he saw on entering the barber's shop was that of his friend Marcel, seated before a dressing-

table, with a towel round his neck, affecting to have his hair dressed. The poor fellow had probably come to find the means of paying for his last night's supper ; he seemed deeply preoccupied, and was knitting his brows with a most dissatisfied expression, while the barber, pretending to dress his hair with a stone-cold pair of tongs, was talking to him with his Gascon accent in an undertone. In a little closet, seated before another dressing-table, and likewise adorned with a towel, sat a very restless man, who looked about him incessantly ; and through the half open door of the back-shop could be seen reflected in an old swinging-glass, the wasted form of a young girl, who, aided by the barber's wife, was trying on a shabby plaid dress.

"What on earth brings you here at this hour?" cried Marcel, whose face regained its usual good-humored expression at the sight of his friend.

Eugene sat down beside the dressing-table and explained, in a few words, his recent adventure, and the object which had brought him there.

"Upon my word," said Marcel, "you are an ingenious youth. What have you to do with the business since there is a baron in it? You saw an interesting young girl who felt the need of a little food ; you treated her to a cold chicken ; it was worthy of you ; there is nothing to be said about that. You require no gratitude, you like the *incognito* : this is heroic. But to go further would be quixotic. To pawn one's

watch or give one's note for a sempstress who is protected by a baron, and whom one has not the honor of visiting, has never been done within the memory of man, except in the tales of chivalry."

"Laugh as much as you like," replied Eugene, "I know that there are many more unfortunates in the world than I can relieve. Those whom I do not know I can but pity, but those whom I see I must help. Do what I will, it is impossible for me to be indifferent to suffering. My charity does not go so far as to seek out poor people, but when I fall in with them I must help them."

"In that case," returned Marcel, "you will have plenty to do ; there is no lack of them in this country."

"What difference does that make?" said Eugene, still agitated by the spectacle he had just beheld. "Is one to go on one's way and let people die of hunger? This wretched girl is giddy, a fool, if you like ; perhaps she does not deserve the compassion she excites, but nevertheless compassion I feel. Would it be better to follow the example of her young companions, who seem to trouble themselves no more about her than if she did not exist, and who but yesterday were helping her to ruin herself. To whom can she turn? To a stranger who would light his cigar with her letter, or to Mademoiselle Pinson, for instance, who is supping and dancing with all her might while her comrade is dying of hunger? I confess, my dear Marcel, that all this actually horrifies me. The idea of

that little minx, yesterday evening, with her songs and her jokes, laughing and chattering at your party, at the very moment when the other, the heroine of her story, was dying in a garret, sickens me. To live like friends, almost like sisters, for days and weeks; to rush to theatres, balls, suppers, together, and a day afterwards for one not to know whether the other is alive or dead, is worse than the indifference of an egotist: it is the insensibility of a brute. Your Mademoiselle Pinson is a monster, and as to these grisettes whom you extol, with their shameless manners, and their heartless friendships — I know of nothing more despicable."

The barber, who had listened silently to this conversation while he continued to pass the cold curling-tongs through Marcel's hair, smiled mischievously as Eugene ended. As gossiping as a magpie, or rather as the barber that he was, when scandal was the topic, and as taciturn and laconic as a Spartan in all matters of business, he had adopted the prudent habit of always letting his customers say what they had to say before he spoke. The indignation which Eugene expressed in such violent terms, however, forced him to break his silence.

"You are severe, sir," said he, in his Gascon accent, with a laugh; "I have the honor of dressing Mademoiselle Mimi's hair, and I believe her to be a most excellent person."

"Yes," replied Eugene, "most excellent, when it is a question of drinking and smoking."

"Very likely," returned the barber. "Young girls like to laugh, sing, and smoke, but some of them have hearts."

"What are you driving at, Father Cadédis," asked Marcel. "Don't give us so much diplomacy, but come to the point."

"I mean to say," resumed the barber, pointing to the back-shop, "that there, hanging on a nail, is a little black silk gown that you, gentlemen, doubtless know, if you know the owner, for her wardrobe is not very extensive. Mademoiselle Mimi sent me that dress this morning at daybreak, and I presume that if she has not done anything for poor Rougette, it is because she is not rolling in wealth herself."

"That is odd," said Marcel, rising and going into the back-shop without the least consideration for the poor girl in the plaid dress. "Then Mimi's song is not true, as she pawns her gown. But how the deuce is she to pay her visits now? She can't go into society to-day."

Eugene had followed his friend. The barber had not deceived them. There, in a dusty corner, in the midst of a host of other garments of every sort, the solitary gown of Mimi Pinson was hanging, humbly and sadly.

"That's it," said Marcel. "I recognize it because I saw it bran new, eighteen months ago. It is Mademoiselle Pinson's dressing-gown, riding-habit, and walking-dress. There must be a little stain about the

size of a wafer on the left sleeve, made by a drop of champagne. And how much did you lend her for it, Father Cadédis? for I suppose that the gown is not sold, and that it is in this boudoir only as security."

"I let her have four *francs*," replied the barber: "and I assure you that it is pure charity, sir. I would only have advanced anybody else forty *sous* upon it, for the article is infernally rotten: one can see through it like a magic-lantern. But I know that Mademoiselle Mimi will pay me; she is good for four *francs*."

"Poor Mimi!" replied Marcel. "I would wager my cap that she only borrowed the money to send it to Rougette."

"Or to pay some importunate creditor," Eugene suggested.

"No," replied Marcel. "I know Mimi, and I believe her incapable of stripping herself to pay a creditor."

"No indeed," replied the barber, "I knew Mademoiselle Mimi in a much better position than her present one, and then she had a great many debts. The duns went regularly every day to seize her effects, and at last they took everything but her bed, for you know, of course, gentlemen, that a debtor's bed cannot be seized. Now at this time Mademoiselle Pinson had four very nice dresses. She put them all on, one over the other, and went to bed in them, in order that they might not be seized; therefore I should be surprised if, nowadays, having but one gown, she pawned it to pay anybody."

"Poor Mimi!" repeated Marcel. "But how on earth does she manage? can she have deceived her friends, and does she possess an unsuspected gown? Perhaps she is ill from eating too much plum-cake, and to be sure, if she is in bed, she has no need to dress herself. No matter. Father Cadédis, this gown afflicts me, with its drooping sleeves, which look as if they were imploring pity; here, deduct four *francs* from the thirty-five *livres* you have just advanced me, and wrap this dress in a towel for me, that I may carry it back to the child. Well, Eugene!" he continued, "what does your Christian charity say to that?"

"That you are right," replied Eugene, "to say and do all this, but that perhaps I am not wrong; I will lay you a wager if you like."

"Done!" cried Marcel. "Bet a cigar, like the members of the Jockey Club. And now you have nothing to do here; I have thirty-one *francs*; we are rich. Let us go at once to Mademoiselle Pinson's; I am curious to see her."

He put the gown under his arm and the two left the shop.

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## CHAPTER VII.

"MADemoisELLE has gone to church," said the woman who answered the door, to the two students, when they reached Mademoiselle Pinson's lodgings.

"To church!" repeated Eugene with surprise.

"To church!" echoed Marcel. "That is impossible; she is not out. Let us in, we are old friends."

"I assure you, sir," said the woman, "that she went to church, about three quarters of an hour ago."

"To what church did she go?"

"To St. Sulpice, as usual; she never misses a morning."

"Yes, yes, I know that she says her prayers, but it seems odd that she should be out to-day."

"There she comes, sir; she is turning the corner; you can see her for yourself."

It really was Mademoiselle Pinson coming home from church. Marcel no sooner caught sight of her than he rushed toward her, impatient to examine her toilet. She had on, in lieu of a gown, a petticoat of dark calico, half hidden by a green serge curtain, of which she had contrived to make herself a sort of shawl. From this singular costume, which, however, owing to its dark tone, did not attract attention, peeped her graceful head in its white cap, and her little feet in gaiter-boots. She had wrapped herself in her curtain with so much art and care that it really looked like an old shawl, and the border could hardly be seen. In short, she contrived to be charming even in this toggery, and to prove, for the thousandth time, that a pretty woman is always pretty.

"How do I look?" said she to the young men, opening her curtain a little and giving them a glimpse of

her slender waist in its trim corsets. "This is a morning-dress Worth has just sent me."

"You look charming!" cried Marcel. "Upon my soul, I never would have believed anybody could look so well in a window-curtain."

"Do you really think so?" returned Mademoiselle Pinson. "I look a little bunchy, though."

"Like a bunch of roses!" replied Marcel. "I am almost sorry now that I brought you back your dress."

"My dress? Where did you find it?"

"Where you left it, most likely."

"And have you rescued it from captivity?"

"Yes, by Jove, I paid its ransom. Do you resent the liberty?"

"No indeed! provided you will let me do as much for you some day. I'm glad enough to see my dress again, for to tell the truth, we have lived together for a long while, and I have insensibly become attached to it."

As she spoke, Mademoiselle Pinson ran briskly up the five flights of stairs which led to her little room, which the two friends entered with her.

"But I can only give you back the dress upon one condition," said Marcel.

"Fie!" exclaimed the grisette. "For shame! Conditions? I won't have it."

"I have a wager," continued Marcel. "And you must tell us honestly why you pawned your gown."

"Let me put it on first," replied Mademoiselle Pinson ; "and then I will tell you the why and wherefore. But I warn you that if you do not choose to wait in my wardrobe or on the roof while I dress myself, I shall veil your faces like Agamemnon's."

"There is no need of that," said Marcel. "We are better conducted than we look, and I will not take a single peep."

"Wait a minute," returned Mademoiselle Pinson. "I have entire confidence in you, but the wisdom of nations teaches us that two precautions are better than one."

So saying, she whisked off her shawl and dropped it lightly over the heads of the two friends so as to blindfold them completely.

"Don't stir," she said. "It will be over in a minute."

"Take care !" cried Marcel, "I don't answer for myself if there is a hole in the curtain. You were not satisfied with our word, so we are at liberty."

"So is my gown, thank fortune !" said Mademoiselle Pinson. "And so is my figure !" she added, laughing, and pulling down the curtain. "Poor little gown, it looks quite new to me ! It is a pleasure to feel it upon me again."

"And your secret ? You must tell us now. Come, be honest, we are not gossips. Why and how could a young woman like you, steady, discreet, virtuous, and modest, hang your entire wardrobe on one nail in this manner ?"

"Why? — why? — why?" repeated Mademoiselle Pinson with some hesitation; then taking each of the young men by an arm, she drew them to the door and said: "Come, and you shall see."

And as Marcel expected, she led the way to the Rue de l'Eperon.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

MARCEL won his bet. Mademoiselle Pinson's four *francs* and the bit of cake were upon Rougette's table, with the remains of Eugene's chicken.

The poor invalid was a little better, but still in bed; and whatever gratitude she may have felt to her unknown benefactor, she sent word by her friend to beg the gentlemen to excuse her, as she was not in a condition to receive them.

"Just like her!" exclaimed Marcel. "She might be dying upon straw in her attic, but she would play the duchess to her pitcher and basin, to the last."

The two friends were therefore obliged reluctantly to go back as they had come, not without a private laugh at the pride and reserve which lodged so strangely in a garret.

After attending the lectures at the Medical School, they dined together, and in the evening took a stroll in the Boulevard des Italiens.

"Now admit," said Marcel, smoking the cigar he

had won that morning, "that I have reason to like, and even to respect these poor girls. Look at the thing calmly from a philosophic point of view. That little Mimi, whom you abused at such a rate, has done a more praiseworthy, meritorious, I might even say a more Christian action than good King Robert, when he let a beggar cut off the fringe of his mantle. Good King Robert, to begin with, had of course a number of mantles, besides which, history says he was at table, when the mendicant approached him on all fours, and cut off the golden fringe of the monarch's cloak with a pair of scissors. Her sacred majesty, the queen, disapproved of the proceeding ; the worthy monarch generously pardoned the fringe-cutter, it is true, but probably he had just dined well. See how far Mimi rises above him ! Mimi most assuredly was fasting when she heard of Rougette's misfortune. You may be certain that the bit of cake she carried away from my rooms was originally intended for her own breakfast. But what did she do ? Instead of breakfasting she went to church, and in this too she proves herself at least equal to King Robert, who was very pious, I admit, but who wasted his time in psalm-singing while the Normans were raising the devil. King Robert gave away his fringe, but, after all, he kept the cloak. Mimi sent her whole and sole gown to Father Cadédis — an incomparable action, inasmuch as Mimi is a woman, young, pretty, coquettish, and poor. Pray observe too that this dress is indis-

pensable to her going as usual to the shop where she earns her daily bread ; so she not only denied herself the cake she was about to eat, but voluntarily incurred the risk of having no dinner. Moreover, Father Cadédis is very far from being a beggar and creeping under the table on all-fours. King Robert made no great sacrifice in giving up his fringe, since it was cut off already, and there is no knowing whether it was not cut crooked, so that it could not be sewed on again, while Mimi, on her own impulse, far from waiting until her gown was stolen, strips her poor form of this garment, which is more useful, more precious to her than the tinsel of all the gimp-makers in Paris. She goes out dressed in a window-curtain, but you may be sure she would go nowhere but to church in such trim. She would rather cut off her arm than be seen such an object in the gardens of the Luxembourg or Tuileries ; but she is not ashamed to appear before God at the hour of her daily prayer. Believe me, Eugene, in that one act of wearing her window-curtain across the Place St. Michel, the Rue de Tournon, and the Rue du Petit-Lion where everybody knows her, there is more courage, humility, and true religion, than in all King Robert the Good's hymns, though everybody talks about those, from the great Bossuet down to the insipid Anquetil — while Mimi will die unknown in her fifth story room, between a bit of hemming and a flower-pot."

"So much the better for her," replied Eugene.

"Now if I wished to draw another parallel," resumed Marcel, "I would compare Rougette to Mucius Scævola. Do you believe that on the whole it was more difficult for a Roman of the time of Tarquin to hold his arm in a brazier for five minutes than for a grisette of the present day to do without food for twenty-four hours? Neither of them complained, but compare their motives. Mucius was in the midst of a hostile camp, in the presence of an Etruscan king whom he had tried to assassinate; he had failed lamentably, he was in the clutches of the police. What comes into his head? A piece of bravado. In order to be admired before he is hung, he reddens his fist over some embers (for there is no proof that the censer was red-hot, nor that he burned his hand to ashes). Whereupon the worthy Porsenna, stupefied by the flourish, pardons and sends him home. I would wager that the said Porsenna, who was capable of so pardoning him, had a good-natured face, and that Scævola guessed that in sacrificing his hand he should save his head. Now Rougette, on the contrary, patiently endured the slowest and most horrible of tortures, death by starvation; there was nobody to see her. She was alone in her garret, with neither Porsenna (that is to say, the baron), nor the Romans, her neighbors, nor the Etruscans, her debtors, to admire her, not even the censer, for her stove was cold. Now, why did she suffer in silence? Pri-

marily from vanity, I grant you, but so did Mucius ; secondly from greatness of soul, and this is to her glory, for if she locked herself up in her room it was just in order that her friends might not know that she was dying, that they might not bewail her courage, that her comrade, Mimi Pinson, whom she knew to be kind and unselfish, might not be compelled to give up her own gown and cake, as she did. Mucius, in Rougette's place, would have pretended to die in silence, but it would have been in a public square, or at the door of a fashionable restaurant. His sublime silence would have been a delicate way of asking for a crust and a glass of wine. It is true that Rougette asked the baron (whom I insist on comparing to Por-senna) for a *louis*, but you see the baron is evidently under some personal obligations to Rougette ; that is obvious to the least sharp-sighted person. Besides, as you wisely observed, the baron may be out of town, in which case Rougette is lost. And do not think to reply by the empty comment that is made on all the fine actions of women, that they do not know what they are about, and run into danger like cats upon a roof. Rougette knows what death is ; she saw it face to face once at the Pont de Jena, for she threw herself into the river once before. I asked her if she had suffered ; she said no, that she had felt nothing until they were fishing her out, when the watermen pulled her by the legs, and, as she expressed it, scraped her head against the edge of the boat."

“Stop!” cried Eugene, “spare me such hideous jokes. Answer me this seriously: do you believe that such a horrible experience, constantly recurring, and always impending, will finally bear some fruit? Have these poor girls, who are thus thrown upon themselves without counsel or support, enough sense to profit by experience? Have they some special demon of their own who has consigned them to eternal madness and misery, or notwithstanding all their folly, do they ever eventually turn out well? Here is one who says her prayers, you say; she goes to church; she fulfills her duties; she lives honestly by her own work; her companions appear to respect her, and even rakes like you do not treat her with your habitual freedom. Here is another who alternates incessantly between madcap frolics and indigence, between excess and the horrors of starvation. Certainly she ought to be able to remember the cruel lessons she has had. Do you think that with good advice, regular habits, and a little help, such women could be made rational creatures? If you do, say so, an occasion offers. Let us go at once to that poor Rougette: no doubt she is still very ill, and her friend will be at her bedside. Don’t discourage me; let me try: I will strive to lead them back to the strait path, to speak to them like a friend. I will neither lecture nor scold; I will approach that sick-bed, take them by the hand, and say” —

The two friends were just passing the Café Tortoni.

The forms of two girls eating ices near a window were visible by the light of the chandeliers. One of them waved her handkerchief, the other burst out laughing.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Marcel; "if you have anything to say to them we have not far to go, for there they are, as I'm a sinner! I know Mimi by her dress, and Rougette by her white cap, — eating as usual. The baron has behaved handsomely, it seems."

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## CHAPTER IX.

"AND does not such recklessness appal you?" said Eugene.

"It does," replied Marcel; "but when you abuse grisettes, I beg you to make an exception in favor of little Mimi. She told us a story at supper, she pawned her gown for four *francs*, and she made herself a shawl with a window-curtain; whoever tells only what she knows, gives everything that she has, and does all that she can, is not expected to do more."



# FANTASIO.

A COMEDY.



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE KING OF BAVARIA.

THE PRINCE OF MANTUA.

MARINONI, *the Prince's Aide-de-camp.*

RUTTEN, *the King's Secretary.*

FANTASIO,

SPARK,

HARTMAN,

FACIO,

ELSBETH, *the King's Daughter.*

HER COMPANION.

OFFICERS, PAGES, *etc.*

} *Young Men of the Town.*



# FANTASIO.

## A COMEDY.



### ACT I.

#### SCENE I. — *The Court.*

*The KING, RUTTEN, and Courtiers.*

*The King.* My friends, some time ago I announced to you the betrothal of my dear Elsbeth to the prince of Mantua. To-day I have to announce the prince's arrival ; he will be here this evening, or to-morrow at the latest. I wish this to be a general holiday ; throw open the prisons, and let the people spend the night in merry-making. Rutten, where is my daughter ?

*[The courtiers withdraw.]*

*Rutten.* In the park with her governess, sire.

*The King.* Why have I not seen her yet to-day ? Is she glad or sorry that her wedding draws near ?

*Rutten.* It struck me that the princess's countenance was slightly overcast. But what young girl is not pensive on the eve of marriage ? Besides, St. John's death has distressed her.

*The King.* Do you really think so? The death of my jester, — a humpbacked, purblind merry-andrew?

*Rutten.* The princess was attached to him.

*The King.* Tell me, Rutten, you have seen the prince, — what sort of man is he? Alas! I am giving him all I hold most precious, and I do not even know him.

*Rutten.* I was but a very short time at Mantua.

*The King.* Be frank. With whose eyes am I to see the truth if not with yours?

*Rutten.* Indeed, sire, I can tell you nothing of either the noble prince's mind or character.

*The King.* Oh ho! You hesitate, courtier though you are! How many panegyrics, hyperboles, and metaphors of the most flattering kind would have rung through this apartment if the prince, who is to be my son-in-law to-morrow, had impressed you as worthy of the title! My friend, have I made a mistake? Have I chosen amiss?

*Rutten.* Sire, the prince is called one of the best of sovereigns.

*The King.* Politics are a spider's web, in which many a hapless fly is left to struggle. I will not sacrifice my daughter to any consideration of expediency.

SCENE II. — *A Street.*

SPARK, HARTMAN, and FACIO, at a table, drinking.

*Hartman.* Since it is our princess's wedding-eve, let us drink, smoke, and be noisy.

*Facio.* It would be good fun to mix with the crowd which is rushing about the streets, and smash a lamp or two over the honest citizens' heads.

*Spark.* No, no, let us smoke peaceably.

*Hartman.* I will do nothing peaceably: I must be heard on a holiday, even if I have to turn bell-clapper and hang myself in a steeple. Where the devil is Fantasio?

*Spark.* Let us wait for him; don't let us begin anything without him.

*Facio.* Bah! He will find us fast enough. He is getting tipsy in some corner of Low Street. Ho there! more wine.

[*Raises his glass. Enter an Officer.*]

*Officer.* Gentlemen, be good enough to move on a little unless you wish your fun to be stopped.

*Hartman.* And why, pray, captain?

*Officer.* The princess is there, upon the terrace, and you yourselves must see that it is not fitting she should hear your shouts.

[*Exit.*]

*Facio.* This is intolerable.

*Spark.* What difference does it make to us whether we have a good time here or somewhere else?

*Hartman.* Who knows that we shall be allowed to have a good time anywhere else? You'll see that a rascal in green will rise from every stone in the pavement to order us to go and have a good time in the moon.

[Enter MARINONI, wrapped in a cloak.]

*Spark.* The princess never committed a despotic action in her life, Heaven bless her! If she doesn't wish us to laugh, she must be sad, or singing; let us leave her in peace.

*Facio.* Humph! Here's a mysterious-looking cloak, sniffing about for news. The gaper seems anxious to speak to us.

*Marinoni* [*approaching*]. Gentlemen, I am a stranger; what is the meaning of this festivity?

*Spark.* The princess Elsbeth is to be married.

*Marinoni.* Ah indeed! She is handsome, I suppose.

*Hartman.* As handsome as you are yourself.

*Marinoni.* Beloved by the whole nation, I infer, for there appears to be a general illumination.

*Hartman.* You are right, my good friend; all these little lamps, as you sagaciously observe, constitute neither more nor less than a general illumination.

*Marinoni.* I designed to inquire whether the princess is the cause of all this rejoicing.

*Hartman.* The sole cause, most powerful orator. We might all of us marry and there would be no sign of rejoicing in this ungrateful town.

*Marinoni.* Happy the princess who is beloved by her people !

*Hartman.* Lighted lamps do not make a nation happy, dear innocent. They do not prevent the princess's being as fantastic as a water-wagtail.

*Marinoni.* Really ! Fantastic, you say ?

*Hartman.* I did, my dear stranger ; I used that word.

[MARINONI bows and withdraws.]

*Facio.* What the deuce does the fellow want, with his Italian accent ? There he goes, to join another group. One can smell the spy a mile off.

*Hartman.* One can smell nothing of the sort ; he is boundlessly stupid, that's all.

*Spark.* Here comes Fantasio.

*Hartman.* What ails him ? He struts like a chief-justice. If I'm not much mistaken he is hatching some mad prank.

*Facio.* Well, old fellow, what shall we make of this fine night ?

[Enter FANTASIO.]

*Fantasio.* Make anything but a new novel.

*Facio.* I was saying that we had better set upon this herd and amuse ourselves a little.

*Fantasio.* Then we shall need pasteboard noses, and plenty of torpedoes.

*Hartman.* Hug the girls, pull the men's cues, and smash the lamps. Come on.

*Fantasio.* Once upon a time there was a king of Persia —

*Hartman.* Come along, Fantasio.

*Fantasio.* I'm not of the party.

*Hartman.* Why not?

*Fantasio.* Give me a glass of that stuff.

[*Drinks.*]

*Hartman.* Your cheeks are as rosy as May.

*Fantasio.* I know it, and my heart is as cold as January. My head is like an old burnt out chimney, nothing in it but wind and ashes. Ugh! [*Sits down.*] How it bores me to see all those people enjoying themselves. I wish that great heavy sky was an immense cotton night-cap which would muffle this stupid city and its stupid inhabitants down to their ears. Come, tell me some stale joke, do, something well worn.

*Hartman.* Why so?

*Fantasio.* To make me laugh. I can't laugh at anything new any longer; perhaps I could laugh at something I know already.

*Hartman.* You seem to be slightly misanthropic and melancholy.

*Fantasio.* Not in the least: it is merely that I have just been to see my mistress.

*Facio.* Once for all, will you come with us?

*Fantasio.* I will go with you if you will stay with me; let us sit here a little while discussing matters and things in general, and admiring our new clothes.

*Facio.* Not I indeed. If you are tired of standing I am tired of sitting; I must have room to disport myself.

*Fantasio.* I don't know how to disport myself. I shall smoke under the chestnut-trees with this good old Spark, who will keep me company. Won't you, Spark?

*Spark.* Yes, if you like.

*Hartman.* In that case adieu. We are going to see the fun.

[*Exeunt HARTMAN and FACIO; SPARK and FANTASIO seat themselves.*]

*Fantasio.* What a failure the sunset is! Nature is pitiable this evening. Only look at that valley over there, and those four or five wretched clouds climbing up the side of the mountain; I used to draw landscapes like that on the fly-leaves of my school-books when I was twelve years old.

*Spark.* What good tobacco! What good beer!

*Fantasio.* How I must bore you, Spark.

*Spark.* No indeed; why should you?

*Fantasio.* Because you bore me so horribly. Don't you mind seeing the same face every day? What the devil can Hartman and Facio find to do in this merry-making?

*Spark.* They are two active scamps who can't be quiet an instant.

*Fantasio.* How delightful the "Arabian Nights" are. Oh my dear Spark! if you could only transport me to China! If I could but come out of my skin for a couple of hours! If I could be that gentleman who is passing.

*Spark.* That you will find difficult.

*Fantasio.* The gentleman who is passing is charming; see what beautiful silk breeches he has! what lovely flowers those are upon his waistcoat! His bunch of seals bobs against his paunch in emulation of his coat-tails which flap against his calves. I am sure that man has a thousand notions in his head which are absolutely unknown to me; his essence is quite individual. Alas! all that men say to each other is the same; the ideas they interchange are all alike; but what windings, what secret drawers there must be inside of those complicated machines! Everybody carries a whole world about in him, an unknown world which lives and dies in silence! What solitudes all those human beings are!

*Spark.* Drink, do, you idler.

*Fantasio.* There is but one thing that has amused me for three days past, and it is, that my creditors have a warrant out against me, and if I set foot in my house I shall instantly be collared by four constables.

*Spark.* That's pleasant, upon my word. Where shall you sleep to-night?

*Fantasio.* At the first comer's. Do you know my furniture is to be sold to-morrow morning? Shan't we go and buy some of it?

*Spark.* Do you want money, Harry? Can I lend you some?

*Fantasio.* Donkey! If I had no money I should have no debts. I have a great mind to take an opera-dancer for a mistress.

*Spark.* That would bore you to death.

*Fantasio.* Far from it; my fancy would be peopled with pirouettes and white satin slippers; I should have my glove on the railing of the balcony from New Year's day to New Year's eve; I should hum clarionet solos in my sleep, until I died in the arms of my beloved from a surfeit of strawberries. *Spark,* did it ever occur to you that none of us has any profession or business?

*Spark.* Is that what depresses you?

*Fantasio.* There are no melancholy fencing-masters.

*Spark.* You seem to me to have exhausted everything.

*Fantasio.* Ah, my dear fellow! to have exhausted everything one must have been everywhere.

*Spark.* Well, what then?

*Fantasio.* What then? Why, where else can one go? Look at this smoky old town; there is not a square, street, or alley, where I have not wandered fifty times; not a flag-stone over which I have not

dragged my weary feet ; not a house of which I don't know the old woman's or young girl's tiresome phiz, eternally to be seen at the window. I can't take a step without retracing my steps of yesterday. Well, my dear fellow, this is nothing compared to my own brain. All its purlieus are a hundred times more familiar to me ; I have rambled in a hundred more directions through this dilapidated brain whereof I am the sole inhabitant ; I have got drunk in all its taverns ; I have rolled through it in a gilded coach, like a king ; I have trotted about it on a quiet nag, like a good citizen ; and now I don't dare to enter it even with a dark lantern, like a burglar.

*Spark.* I can't understand this everlasting self-dissection. For my part, when I smoke, my thoughts take the form of tobacco ; when I drink, of sherry wine or Dutch beer ; when I kiss my sweet-heart's hand they enter into her taper fingers and spread through her being in magnetic currents. The scent of a flower is enough to delight me, and the most trifling object in creation suffices to make a bee of me, and send me flying hither and thither from one new pleasure to another.

*Fantasio.* In a word, you could go fishing.

*Spark.* I could do that or anything else that amused me.

*Fantasio.* Even to taking the moon between your teeth.

*Spark.* That would not amuse me.

*Fantasio.* Pooh! what do you know about it? Taking the moon between one's teeth is not to be despised. Let's play at *trente et quarante*.

*Spark.* Not I.

*Fantasio.* Why not?

*Spark.* Because we should lose our money.

*Fantasio.* Oh! good Lord, what a notion! You don't know what to concoct to bother yourself about. Do you see everything in such dismal hues, unfortunate man? Lose our money? Have you neither faith nor hope? You must be a shocking infidel, capable of withering my heart and dispelling my illusions, — mine, so full of life and sap.

[*He begins to dance.*]

*Spark.* Upon my word, there are times when I would not take my oath that you are not cracked.

*Fantasio* [*still dancing*]. I want a diving-bell! a glass diving-bell! -

*Spark.* What do you want a diving-bell for?

*Fantasio.* Isn't it Jean Paul who says that a man absorbed in a great thought is like a diver in his bell in the vast ocean?

*Spark.* Turn newspaper-writer or literary man of some sort, Harry; it is the only efficacious way left us to get rid of misanthropy and numb the imagination.

*Fantasio.* Oh! if I were but mad about a pickled lobster, or a grisette, or a collection of minerals! *Spark*, let's try and build a house.

*Spark.* Why don't you write down your fancies? they would make a pretty collection.

*Fantasio.* A sonnet is better than a long poem, and a glass of wine than a sonnet.

[*He drinks.*]

*Spark.* Why don't you travel? Go to Italy.

*Fantasio.* I've been there.

*Spark.* Well, didn't you think it a fine country?

*Fantasio.* There are hosts of insects as large as cockchafers which bite you all night.

*Spark.* Go to France.

*Fantasio.* There is no good Rhine wine in Paris.

*Spark.* Go to England.

*Fantasio.* Have the English a country of their own? I would rather see them here than there.

*Spark.* Go to the devil then.

*Fantasio.* Oh if there were but a devil in heaven! If there were but a hell, how quick I'd blow my brains out to see it all! What a wretched creature man is! He can't so much as jump out of his own window without breaking his legs. He has to practice the violin ten years to become a fair musician; he has to learn before he can be a painter or an ostler; he has to learn to make an omelette. *Spark*, I should like to sit on the railing of a bridge and watch the water flowing by and count one, two, three, four, five, six, and so on until I died.

*Spark.* Many would laugh at what you say: for my part it makes me shudder; it is the story of our whole century. Eternity is a great cyrie whence the successive ages, like young eaglets, have taken wing to trav-

erse the sky and vanish. Ours, now that his turn has come, stands on the edge of the nest, but his wings have been clipped, and he awaits death, gazing upon space without the power to launch into it.

*Fantasio* [*sings*].

Thou call'st me thy life, ah call me thy soul,  
For the soul is immortal, and life's but a day.

Do you know a more divine song than that, Spark? It is a Portuguese song; I never think of it without longing to be in love with somebody.

*Spark*. With whom, for instance?

*Fantasio*. With whom? I don't know. Some fair, plump girl like Mieris's women; something as soft as the west wind and as pale as moonlight; something as pensive as those little servant-maids in the Flemish pictures, offering the stirrup-cup to the high-booted traveller who sits straight as a pike on his large white horse. What a pretty thing the stirrup-cup is! A young woman on the threshold, the blazing fire visible within, the supper-table set, the children asleep,—all the quiet of a calm and contemplative life in one corner of the picture; and without, the man, panting, but firm in his saddle, with twenty, thirty leagues still before him; a mouthful of brandy, and good-by! the dark night is beyond, the weather is lowering and the forest dangerous; the good woman follows him with her eyes for a moment, and as she turns toward her hearth again, bestows that sublime alms of the poor: 'God keep him!'

*Spark.* Harry, if you were in love you would be the happiest of men.

*Fantasio.* Love does not exist any longer, my dear fellow. His nurse, Religion, has dangling breasts like an old purse with a penny at each end. Love is a consecrated wafer, to be broken at the foot of an altar and swallowed with a kiss ; there are no more altars, and there is no more love. Long live nature ! There's wine at any rate.

[*He drinks.*]

*Spark.* You will be tipsy.

*Fantasio.* You say true ; I shall be tipsy.

*Spark.* It is rather late for that.

*Fantasio.* What do you call late ? Is noon late ? Is midnight early ? When do you begin the day ? Let us stay here, Spark ; let's drink, discuss, analyze, be irrational, and talk politics ; let us devise combinations for the government ; let us catch all the chafers which fly round this candle and put them into our pockets. Do you know that steam-cannon are a fine thing from a philanthropic point of view ?

*Spark.* What do you mean ?

*Fantasio.* Once upon a time there was a king who was very, very good, and very, very happy.

*Spark.* Well ?

*Fantasio.* The only thing he needed to complete his happiness was children. He caused public prayers to be offered in all the mosques.

*Spark.* What are you driving at ?

*Fantasio.* I am thinking of my dear "Arabian Nights;" they all begin so. Bravo, Spark, I'm tipsy! I must do something! Tra la la! Come, let's be off. [*A funeral passes.*] Holloa, good people, who are you burying? This is no hour for funerals.

*The Pall-bearers.* We are burying St. John.

*Fantasio.* Is St. John dead? The king's fool? Who succeeds him? The Secretary of State?

*The Pall-bearers.* His place is still vacant, so you can apply for it if you like.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Spark.* You deserved that piece of impertinence. What induced you to stop those people?

*Fantasio.* They were not impertinent. The man gave me a bit of friendly advice which I intend to follow forthwith.

*Spark.* You mean to turn court jester?

*Fantasio.* This very night, if they will have me. Since I can't sleep at home, I mean to see the royal comedy which is to be performed to-morrow, and from the king's box into the bargain.

*Spark.* How clever you are! You will be recognized, and the footmen will kick you out; wasn't the late queen your godmother?

*Fantasio.* How stupid you are! I shall wear a hump and red wig like St. John's, and nobody on earth will know me, even if I had three dozen relations at my heels. [*He knocks at a shop door.*]

Holloa there, good man ! Let me in if you haven't gone out ; you, and your wife, and your pups.

*A tailor [opening the door].* What does your worship want ?

*Fantasio.* Aren't you the court tailor ?

*Tailor.* The same, at your service ?

*Fantasio.* Did you make St. John's clothes ?

*Tailor.* Yes, sir.

*Fantasio.* You knew him, then ? You know on which side his hump was, how he trimmed his mustache, and what sort of wig he wore ?

*Tailor.* Ha, ha ! You are joking, sir.

*Fantasio.* Man, I am not joking. Come into your back-shop, and if you do not wish to be poisoned in your coffee at breakfast to-morrow, be silent as the grave as to all that takes place there.

*[Exit with the Tailor ; SPARK follows them.]*

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### SCENE III. — *An inn near Munich.*

*Enter the PRINCE OF MANTUA and MARINONI.*

*The Prince.* What news, colonel ?

*Marinoni.* I beg pardon, your highness ?

*The Prince.* What news, Marinoni ?

*Marinoni.* Melancholy, fantastic, mad with spirits, submissive to her father, very fond of green peas.

*The Prince.* Write all that down ; I can read nothing easily except a round hand.

*Marinoni* [*writes*]. Melan —

*The Prince.* Write to yourself; I am evolving an important project while I dine.

*Marinoni.* Here is what your highness desires.

*The Prince.* Good; I proclaim you my intimate friend; I know of nobody in my whole kingdom who writes as well as you do. Sit down, — there, at a distance from me. So, my friend, you think that the character of the princess, my future wife, is privately known to you?

*Marinoni.* Yes, your highness. I scoured the environs of the palace, and these notes are her principal characteristics, which I gathered from the conversations in which I mingled.

*The Prince* [*looking at himself in the glass*]. It strikes me that I am powdered like a man of the lower classes.

*Marinoni.* Your highness's coat is magnificent.

*The Prince.* What should you say, *Marinoni*, if you saw your master in a simple, olive-green frock-coat?

*Marinoni.* Your highness is testing my credulity.

*The Prince.* No, colonel: know that your master is the most romantic of men.

*Marinoni.* Romantic, your highness?

*The Prince.* Yes, my friend, — for I have conferred that title upon you, — the important project I was evolving is something hitherto unheard of in my family. I mean to appear at my royal father-in-law's court in the dress of a simple aide-de-camp. It is not

enough to have sent a gentleman of my household, — and that gentleman yourself, Marinoni, — to ascertain the general opinion respecting the Princess of Mantua; I wish to see her with my own eyes.

*Marinoni.* Is it possible, your highness?

*The Prince.* Do not be petrified. The intimate friend of such a man as myself should have a vast and enterprising mind.

*Marinoni.* I see but one thing to interfere with your highness's plan.

*The Prince.* What is that?

*Marinoni.* The idea of such an undertaking could occur only to the glorious prince who governs us, but if my gracious sovereign conceals himself among his suite, to whom will the King of Bavaria do the honors of the splendid banquet which is to be given in the great gallery?

*The Prince.* True: if I go in disguise somebody must personate me. That is impossible, Marinoni; I never thought of it.

*Marinoni.* But why impossible, your highness?

*The Prince.* I might indeed lower the princely dignity to the rank of a colonel, but can you suppose that I would ever consent to elevate any man, no matter who, to mine? Beside, do you think my father-in-law would ever pardon me for doing so?

*Marinoni.* The king has the reputation of being a man of great good sense, ability, and good humor.

*The Prince.* Ah! I can't abandon my scheme

without regret. Think of penetrating into this foreign court without pomp or circumstance, observing everything, approaching the princess under a feigned name, and perhaps making myself beloved by her ! Oh, I am forgetting myself ; that would be out of the question. Marinoni, my friend, try on my court dress ; I can't resist it.

*Marinoni* [*bowing*]. Your highness !

*The Prince*. Do you think future ages will ever forget such an incident ?

*Marinoni*. Never, gracious prince.

*The Prince*. Come and try on my coat.

[*Exeunt.*]

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## ACT II.

SCENE I. — *The King of Bavaria's palace gardens.*

*Enter ELSBETH and her Companion.*

*The Com.* My poor eyes have wept for him like floods of rain.

*Elsbeth*. You are so kind-hearted ! I was fond of St. John too ; he was so clever. No mere buffoon.

*The Com.* To think of the poor man's going to heaven on the very eve of your marriage ! He who talked of nothing but you at dinner and supper, and all day long. Such a lively, amusing fellow, that he made one like ugliness, and one's eyes followed him in spite of themselves.

*Elsbeth.* Don't mention my marriage! That is a worse misfortune.

*The Com.* Do you know that the Prince of Mantua will be here to-day? They say he is a perfect Amadis.

*Elsbeth.* Why do you say that, dear? He is hideous and imbecile, and everybody here knows it already.

*The Com.* Really? They told me he was an Amadis.

*Elsbeth.* I didn't want an Amadis, my dear, — but it is a cruel thing sometimes to be only a king's daughter. My father is the best of men; this marriage insures peace to his kingdom; *he* will be rewarded by the blessings of his people; but I, alas! shall have only his, and nothing more.

*The Com.* How sadly you speak!

*Elsbeth.* If I were to refuse the prince, war would soon be declared again; how unfortunate it is that these treaties must always be signed with tears! I wish I were strong-minded, and ready to marry anybody for a political necessity. To be the mother of a nation may console great souls, but not soft hearts. I am only a poor little day-dreamer; perhaps I have to thank the novels which you always have in your pocket for that.

*The Com.* For heaven's sake, say nothing about them!

*Elsbeth.* I have known but little of life, and I have dreamed a great deal.

*The Com.* If the Prince of Mantua be what you say, I feel sure that God will not permit your union to be concluded.

*Elsbeth.* You do! God lets men go their own gait, my poor dear, and pays no more heed to our sighs than to the bleating of sheep.

*The Com.* I am certain that if you were to refuse the prince, your father would not compel you to marry him.

*Elsbeth.* No, certainly not, and that is why I am ready to sacrifice myself. Would you have me go to my father and beg him to break his word and erase his revered name from the contract which makes thousands happy? What does it signify if I am wretched? I allow my good father to be a good king.

*The Com.* [*weeps*]. Ah! ah!

*Elsbeth.* Don't cry about me, dear; you might make me cry myself, and a royal bride must not have red eyes. Don't grieve about it. After all, I shall be a queen; perhaps that is pleasant. I may take a fancy to my jewels, who knows? — or to my equipages, or my new court. Luckily, a princess gains many things by marriage besides a husband. Perhaps I shall find happiness hidden among my wedding-presents.

*The Com.* You are a real paschal lamb!

*Elsbeth.* Look here, dear, let us begin by taking it gaily; we can always cry when the time comes. They say the Prince of Mantua is the most ridiculous creature ever seen.

*The Com.* If St. John were but alive!

*Elsbeth.* Ah, St. John! St. John!

*The Com.* You were very fond of him, my child.

*Elsbeth.* It is strange, but his cleverness bound me to him by invisible threads which seemed like heart-strings. The incessant fun he used to make of my romantic notions amused me excessively, while I can hardly endure a great many people who overflow with them like myself. There was something indescribable about him, in his eyes, his gestures, his way of taking snuff. He was a curious man; as he talked, the most delightful pictures used to pass before my eyes; his words seemed to give reality to the oddest fancies.

*The Com.* He was a real Triboulet.

*Elsbeth.* I don't know that, but he was a diamond of wit.

*The Com.* I see the pages running hither and thither; I think the prince will soon be here; you ought to go back to the palace and dress.

*Elsbeth.* Give me a quarter of an hour more, I entreat; go and get ready what I must wear; alas! dear, I have not much longer to dream.

*The Com.* Can this marriage take place if it does not please heaven? A father sacrifice his child? The king will be worse than Jephthah if he does so.

*Elsbeth.* You must not abuse my father; go, dear, and get everything ready. [*Exit the Companion.*] I think there is somebody behind that shrubbery. Is

it the phantom of my poor fool that I see sitting among the field-flowers? Who are you? Speak? Why do you gather those flowers?

[*She goes towards a green bank.*]

*Fantasio* [*seated, dressed as a jester, with a hump and wig*]. I am an honest flower-picker who wishes only to greet your bright eyes.

*Elsbeth*. What do you mean by this attire? How can you presume to put on that wig, and parody a man to whom I was attached? Are you a 'prentice fool?

*Fantasio*. May it please your serene highness, I am the king's new fool; the major-domo has received me graciously, I have been presented to the valet, the turn-spits have patronized me ever since last evening, and I am modestly gathering flowers, and waiting for my wit to come to me.

*Elsbeth*. That is a flower I doubt your ever gathering.

*Fantasio*. Why not? Wit may come to an old man as well as to a young maid. It is so difficult sometimes to tell a clever hit from a stupid blunder. The main thing is to talk a great deal; the worst shot, if he fires seven hundred and eighty times running, may hit the mark as often as a good one who fires but once or twice. I only ask to be fed in proportion to the capacity of my stomach, and I will watch my shadow in the sun to see if my wig grows.

*Elsbeth*. So here you are in poor St. John's spoils!

You are right to talk of your shadow ; so long as you may wear this costume it will be more like him than you will.

*Fantasio.* I am in the act of composing an elegy which will decide my fate.

*Elsbeth.* In what way ?

*Fantasio.* It will either prove me to be the first of men or it will be good for nothing. I am going to turn the universe upside down to make an acrostic of it ; the sun, moon, and stars are fighting to get into my rhymes like school-boys at the door of a pantomime.

*Elsbeth.* Poor man ! What a trade you have chosen, — to make wit at so much an hour. Have you neither arms nor legs ? would you not do better to harrow the earth than your own brains ?

*Fantasio.* Poor child ! What a trade you have chosen, — to marry a dolt you have never seen. Have you neither head nor heart ? would you not do better to sell your clothes than yourself ?

*Elsbeth.* You are very audacious, sir.

*Fantasio.* What do you call this flower ?

*Elsbeth.* A tulip. What then ?

*Fantasio.* A red tulip or a blue one ?

*Elsbeth.* Blue, I should say.

*Fantasio.* Not at all, it is red.

*Elsbeth.* Do you mean to put a new dress on an old saw ? You need not go so far out of the way to say that of tastes and colors there is no disputing.

*Fantasio.* I am not disputing; I tell you that this is a red tulip, yet I admit that it is blue.

*Elsbeth.* How do you manage that?

*Fantasio.* Just as you do your marriage-contract. Who under the sun can say whether he was born red or blue? Even the tulips don't know. Gardeners and lawyers make such extraordinary jointures that apples turn into pumpkins, and thistles drop from the jaw of an ass to be served in sauce on an archbishop's silver dish. That tulip fully expected to be red, but they married her, and to her surprise she is blue. Thus is the whole world metamorphosed by the hand of man, and poor Dame Nature must sometimes laugh in her own face when she beholds her eternal travestie reflected in the lakes and seas. Do you believe that the original Paradise smelt of roses? It only smelt of new-mown hay. The rose is the child of civilization; she is a duchess, like you, or me.

*Elsbeth.* The pale hawthorn-blossom may become pink, or a thistle an artichoke, but one flower can never be changed into another; so what does Nature care? They do not really change her, they embellish, — or destroy. The humblest violet would perish rather than yield, if they tried, by artificial means, to alter her form by so much as a single stamen.

*Fantasio.* That is why I respect violets more than king's daughters.

*Elsbeth.* There are certain topics which even jesters have no right to joke about. Listen to me; if you were

eaves-dropping while I was talking to my companion, take heed to your ears.

*Fantasio.* Not to my ears, but to my tongue. You refuse quarter in the wrong quarter.

*Elsbeth.* Don't make puns if you wish to earn your wages, and don't compare me to a tulip unless you wish to earn something besides.

*Fantasio.* Why not? A pun consoles one for many a grief, and playing with words is as good as playing with thoughts, deeds, and our fellow-beings. Everything is a pun here below, and it is as difficult to understand the glance of a child of four years old as the meaning of three modern dramas.

*Elsbeth.* You appear to look at the world through a sort of prism.

*Fantasio.* Everybody has his own spectacles but nobody else knows exactly the color of the glasses. Who could tell me positively whether I am happy or unhappy, good or bad, clever or stupid?

*Elsbeth.* You are ugly, that's certain.

*Fantasio.* Not more certain than that you are beautiful. — Here comes your father and your future husband; who knows whether you will marry him or not?

[*Exit.*

*Elsbeth.* Since I can't avoid encountering the Prince of Mantua now, I had better go and meet them.

*Enter the KING; MARINONI, disguised as the Prince, and the PRINCE as an aide-de-camp.*

*The King.* Prince, this is my daughter. Excuse this rustic attire ; you are the guest of a plain citizen, like those he rules over, and our etiquette is as easy for ourselves as for others.

*Marinoni.* Madam, allow me to kiss that fair hand, if it is not too great a favor for my unworthy lips.

*Elsbeth.* Your highness will excuse my returning to the palace ; I shall meet you in a more befitting manner in the drawing-room this evening.

[*Exit.*

*The Prince.* The princess is right ; her modesty is adorable.

*The King* [*aside to Marinoni*]. Who is this aide-de-camp who follows you like a shadow ? The way in which he adds some unmeaning remark to whatever we say is intolerable. Let me beg of you to dismiss him.

[*MARINONI whispers to the PRINCE.*

*The Prince* [*aside*]. It was clever of you to persuade him to send me away ; I shall try and overtake the princess, and make a few delicate speeches without being too significant.

[*Exit.*

*The King.* Is your aide-de-camp an idiot, my dear prince ? What on earth can you do with a fellow like that ?

*Marinoni.* Hum, hum, — let us walk on a little further, your Majesty ; I think I see a charming arbor in that grove.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. — *Another part of the garden.**Enter the PRINCE.*

*The Prince.* My disguise succeeds perfectly ; I reconnoitre, and I am making myself beloved. So far everything is just as I could have wished ; the father impresses me as a great king, though too informal, and I am much mistaken if he did not fancy me from the first. I see the princess coming back to the palace ; fortune favors me amazingly. [*Enter ELSBETH ; the PRINCE approaches her.*] Will your highness permit a faithful follower of your future husband's to offer you the sincere congratulations which his humble and devoted heart finds it impossible to repress in your presence ? How happy are the great ones of this earth ! They may aspire to your hand. I may not, that were impossible ; I am of obscure birth ; I have naught to offer but a name at which the enemy trembles ; a pure and spotless heart beats beneath this uniform ; I am a poor soldier, riddled from head to foot with bullets ; I have not a ducat ; I am alone, an exile alike from my native soil and my celestial country, by which I mean the land of my dreams ; there is no woman's heart that I may press to my own ; I live silent and under a ban.

*Elsbeth.* What do you want, my dear sir ? Are you mad, or asking for alms ?

*The Prince.* How difficult it were to find words for my emotions! I saw you coming along this walk alone, and I considered it my duty to throw myself at your feet and offer you my escort to the garden gate.

*Elsbeth.* I am much obliged to you; be good enough to leave me.

[*Exit.*

*The Prince.* Was it a mistake to accost her? Yet I was forced to do so, as I am to captivate her in disguise. Yes, I did well to accost her. But she answered me very disagreeably. Perhaps I ought not to have spoken with so much warmth. And yet I was compelled to do so, for her marriage is almost concluded, and I am bound to supplant Marinoni, who is personating me. Yes, yes, I was right to speak with warmth. But her reply was unpleasant. Can she be false and cold-hearted? It will be well to ascertain this adroitly.

[*Exit.*

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SCENE III. — *An antechamber in the palace.*

FANTASIO *lying on a sofa.*

*Fantasio.* What a delightful vocation is that of a fool! I suspect I was tipsy yesterday evening when I put on this dress and presented myself at the palace, but in truth my sober senses never suggested anything half so wise as this piece of folly. I presented myself,

and was immediately received, petted, enrolled, and best of all — forgotten. I come and go in this palace as if I had been here all my days. I met the king just now, and he had not even the curiosity to look at me ; his jester died, and they told him : ‘ Here’s another, sire.’ Capital. Thank heaven, my brain is free at last ; I can play every prank that comes into my head without anybody’s saying me nay. I am one of the King of Bavaria’s tame animals, and as long as I choose to wear my hump and wig I may live between a spaniel and a Guinea-pig until I die. Meanwhile my creditors may flatten their noses against my door at their leisure : I am as safe under this wig as if I were in the Indies. Isn’t that the princess I see in the next room, through this glass door ? She is trying on her wedding-veil ; two great tears are running down her cheeks, — there, one of them has dropped upon her bosom, like a pearl. Poor little thing ! I did overhear what she said to her companion this morning, but it was by mere chance ; I was lying on the turf with no deeper design than to take a nap. Now, there she is again, weeping, and she has no idea that I am watching her again. Ah ! if I were a proficient in rhetoric, what profound reflections I would make upon misery in a crown, upon this poor little lamb round whose neck they are tying a pink ribbon before they lead her to the shambles. The little girl is evidently romantic ; it is cruel to marry her to a man whom she does not know, — yet she sacrifices

herself in silence. In what freaks Chance indulges ! I must needs get tipsy, fall in with St. John's funeral, don his dress, get his post, in short, commit the maddest act that was ever conceived, to come here and behold through this glass the only tears this child will probably shed over her melancholy bridal veil.

[Exit.

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SCENE IV. — *The Garden.*

*The PRINCE and MARINONI.*

*The Prince.* Colonel, you are a fool.

*Marinoni.* Your highness misunderstands me painfully.

*The Prince.* You are an absolute blockhead. Couldn't you have prevented it ? I have confided to you the grandest scheme which has been conceived for numberless years, and you, my best friend, my devoted follower, heap blunder upon blunder. No, no, it is of no use saying any more, — it is perfectly unpardonable.

*Marinoni.* How can I prevent your highness's incurring the annoyances which necessarily result from the character you have assumed ? You command me to take your name and comport myself as if I were really the Prince of Mantua. Can I prevent the King of Bavaria's snubbing my aide-de-camp ? You should not have joined in the conversation.

*The Prince.* I like a rascal like you, undertaking to give me orders.

*Marinoni.* But consider, your royal highness, I must either be the prince or the aide-de-camp; I am acting by your own commands.

*The Prince.* To call me impudent before the whole court, because I kissed the princess's hand! I am ready to declare war against him, and to return to my kingdom and put myself at the head of my army.

*Marinoni.* But your highness should recollect that the affront was addressed to the aide-de-camp, not to the prince. Do you expect homage in that disguise?

*The Prince.* Enough. Give me back my coat.

*Marinoni* [*taking off the coat*]. I am ready to die for my sovereign if he require it.

*The Prince.* The fact is, I cannot make up my mind what to do. I am furious at what has happened, yet I am wretched at having to abandon my plan. The princess does not seem altogether irresponsible to my tender speeches. I have already said two or three incredible things to her. Come, let us reflect.

*Marinoni* [*holding the coat*]. What shall I do, your highness?

*The Prince.* Put it on again, put it on again, and let us go back to the palace.

[*Exeunt.*]

## SCENE V.

ELSBETH and the KING.

*The King.* My daughter, you must give a candid answer to what I am about to ask; do you dislike this marriage?

*Elsbeth.* Sire, you can answer for me; if you like it, I like it; if you dislike it, I dislike it.

*The King.* The prince seems to me a commonplace person, of whom it is difficult to say one thing or the other. His aide-de-camp's stupidity alone injures him in my estimation; he may be a good prince, but he is not a remarkable man. There is nothing about him which either attracts or repels me. What can I say to you? A woman's heart has secrets which I cannot fathom; they often choose such strange heroes, and fasten so unaccountably on one or two points in a man who is presented to them, that it is impossible to judge for them, unless one has some obvious indication as a guide. Tell me frankly what you think of your betrothed.

*Elsbeth.* I think that he is Prince of Mantua, and that war would be recommenced to-morrow, if I were to refuse to marry him.

*The King.* That is certain, my child.

*Elsbeth.* So I think I shall marry him, and that there will be an end of the war.

*The King.* May my nation's blessings thank you

for your father ! Oh my beloved child, I should rejoice in this alliance, but I do not like to see a melancholy in those blue eyes which belies their resignation. Think over it for a few days.

[Exit. Enter FANTASIO.

*Elsbeth.* Here you are again, poor fellow. How do you like your place ?

*Fantasio.* As a bird likes liberty.

*Elsbeth.* As a bird likes a cage, you had better say. This palace is a pretty cage, but a cage it is, nevertheless.

*Fantasio.* The size of a palace or room does not make a man free, or the reverse. The body goes where it can ; the imagination sometimes spreads heaven-wide wings in a cell not a span across.

*Elsbeth.* So then, fool, you are happy.

*Fantasio.* Perfectly. I talk to the puppies and the turn-spits. There is a little dog no bigger than that, in the kitchen, who says delightful things.

*Elsbeth* In what language ?

*Fantasio.* In the purest style. He would not make a single grammatical error in a year.

*Elsbeth.* May I not hear a few words in his style ?

*Fantasio.* Really you must excuse me ; it is a secret language. Little dogs are not the only ones who speak it ; the trees, even the ears of wheat understand it, but kings' daughters do not. When is your wedding to be ?

*Elsbeth.* It will all be over in a few days.

*Fantasio.* That is to say, it will all begin. I have a wedding present for you.

*Elsbeth.* What is it? I am curious to know.

*Fantasio.* I mean to give you a pretty little stuffed canary, which sings like a nightingale.

*Elsbeth.* How can he sing if he is stuffed?

*Fantasio.* He sings exquisitely.

*Elsbeth.* Really you make fun of me relentlessly.

*Fantasio.* Not at all. My canary has a little bird-organ inside of him: you touch a small spring in his left foot, and he sings all the new operas as well as Signora Grisi.

*Elsbeth.* He is an invention of your own brain, I imagine.

*Fantasio.* By no means. He is a court canary. There are plenty of very well brought up little girls whose ways of going on are in no wise different from his. They have a little spring under their left arm, a pretty little diamond spring, like a dandy's watch. Their tutor or governess touches the spring, and immediately you see their lips open with a gracious smile: a charming cascade of honeyed expressions flows with a sweet murmur, from their tongue, and all the social proprieties, like airy nymphs, begin to trip lightly round this miraculous fountain. The future husband opens his astonished eyes, the spectators murmur approvingly, and the father, replete with secret satisfaction, proudly contemplates his gold shoe-buckles.

*Elsbeth.* You seem disposed to harp upon certain

subjects. Tell me, fool, what have the poor young girls done to you, that you satirize them so mercilessly? Have you no respect for the performance of a duty?

*Fantasio.* I have a high respect for ugliness; that is why I have such profound respect for myself.

*Elsbeth.* You seem to know more than you choose to admit, sometimes. Who are you, and whence do you come, to have been able in a single day to discover mysteries which princes themselves will never suspect? Is your nonsense aimed at me, or do you talk at random?

*Fantasio.* At random; I talk at Random a great deal. He is my confidant.

*Elsbeth.* He seems to have told you some things you ought never to have known. I am inclined to think that you watch me.

*Fantasio.* Heaven he knows. What difference can it make?

*Elsbeth.* More than you can fancy. Not long ago, while I was trying on my veil in that room, I heard steps behind the arras. I am much mistaken if they were not yours.

*Fantasio.* You may rest assured that whatever happened will remain between your handkerchief and myself. I am not more indiscreet than I am inquisitive. What pleasure could I have in your grief? What grief could I have in your pleasure? You are one thing, I am the other. You are beautiful, I ugly;

you rich, I poor. You see that there is no connection between us. What does it matter to you if two wheels have crossed for an instant upon the high-road of chance, which cannot follow the same track, nor mark the same dust? Is it my fault if one of your tears dropped upon my cheek as I slept?

*Elsbeth.* You speak to me in the guise of a man whom I loved, and that is why I listen, despite myself. My eyes seem to see St. John, — but perhaps you are only a spy.

*Fantasio.* What good would it do me? Even if your marriage have really cost you some tears, and that I have accidentally found it out, what should I gain by telling? They would not give me a gold piece for it, nor would they shut you up in the dark closet: I can very well understand how annoying it must be to marry the Prince of Mantua, but after all it is not I who am obliged to do so. To-morrow, or the day after, you will be on your way to Mantua with your wedding-gown, and I shall still be sitting on this stool in my old shoes. Why do you try to believe that I bear you malice? I have no reason to wish for your death; you never lent me money.

*Elsbeth.* But if by accident you know what I wish nobody to know, had I not better turn you off for fear of more accidents?

*Fantasio.* Do you look upon me as the confidant in a tragedy, and fear that I shall dog your shadow with declamations? Don't send me away, I beg of

you ; I find it very amusing here. See, here comes your companion brimming with mystery. The guarantee that I shall not overhear you is, that I go forthwith to the buttery to eat a plover's wing which the major-domo has put aside for his wife.

[Exit. Enter the COMPANION.

*The Com.* My dear Elsbeth, do you know that something has happened ?

*Elsbeth.* What do you mean ? You are trembling from head to foot.

*The Com.* The prince is not the prince, nor the aide-de-camp either. It is a perfect fairy-tale.

*Elsbeth.* What tangle is this ?

*The Com.* Hush ! One of the prince's officers has just told me. The Prince of Mantua is a real Almaviva ; he is disguised and hidden among his staff ; doubtless he wished to see and know you as they do in fairy tales. This worthy lord disguised himself like Lindor ; he who was presented to you as your future husband is only an aide-de-camp named Marinoni.

*Elsbeth.* Impossible !

*The Com.* It is certain, a thousand times over. The worthy man is in disguise ; he cannot be recognized ; it is most extraordinary.

*Elsbeth.* An officer told you this ?

*The Com.* One of the prince's suite. You can ask him yourself.

*Elsbeth.* And he did not point out the real Prince of Mantua among the suite ?

*The Com.* You must remember that the poor man was trembling at what he told me. He only confided the secret from a desire to make himself agreeable to you; and he knew that I would tell you. As to Marinoni, that is a fact; but he did not show me which was the true prince.

*Elsbeth.* If this be true it gives me food for thought. Bring that officer here.

[Enter a page.]

*The Com.* What's the matter, Flamel? you are out of breath.

*The Page.* Oh madam! Something has happened which was like to kill us all of laughing. But I dare not speak before her highness.

*Elsbeth.* Speak; what has happened?

*The Page.* Just as the Prince of Mantua was entering the court-yard on horseback at the head of his suite, his wig suddenly rose in the air and disappeared.

*Elsbeth.* Nonsense! what do you mean?

*The Page.* May I die if it is not the truth, madam. The wig rose in the air on a fish-hook; we found it in the buttery beside a broken bottle; nobody knows who played the trick. But the prince is none the less furious, and swears that if the perpetrator is not put to death he will declare war against your royal father, and carry fire and sword through the land.

*Elsbeth.* Let us hear the whole story, my dear; my gravity begins to give way. [Enter a second page.] Well, what now?

*Second Page.* Madam, the king's fool is in prison ; it was he who fished off the prince's wig.

*Elsbeth.* The fool in prison, and by the prince's order ?

*Second Page.* Yes, your highness.

*Elsbeth.* Come with me, dear mother ; I must speak with you.

[Exit with her COMPANION.

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## SCENE VI.

*Enter the PRINCE and MARINONI.*

*The Prince.* No, no, let us take off my disguise. It is high time I should give way. I shall not pass this over lightly. Blood and fire ! A royal wig on a fish-hook ! Are we among the barbarians of Siberia ? Do civilization and decorum still exist under the sun ? I am bursting with rage, and I feel as if my eyes would start from my head.

*Marinoni.* You will ruin everything by your violence.

*The Prince.* And this father, this King of Bavaria, this monarch so lauded in all last year's almanacs, this man with so much propriety of manner, who expresses himself in such appropriate language, to burst out laughing when he saw his son-in-law's wig fly through the air ! For, after all, Marinoni, though it was your wig they carried off, still was it not the

Prince of Mantua's, as they thought you were he? When I reflect that if it had been I in my own flesh and blood, my wig might — Ah! but there is a providence. When Heaven suddenly inspired me with the idea of disguising myself, — when the thought, “I will disguise myself” darted through my brain, — Destiny foresaw this catastrophe. This has saved the head that governs my people from the most intolerable outrage. But, by heaven, all shall be known. My dignity has been in abeyance too long. Since every majesty, human and divine, has been mercilessly insulted and wounded, and no idea of good and evil is left among men, and the monarch of several thousands of subjects bursts out laughing, like a stable-boy, at the sight of a wig — Marinoni, give me back my coat!

*Marinoni* [*taking off his coat*]. I am ready to suffer a million tortures at my sovereign's command.

*The Prince*. I know your devotion. Come, I shall tell the king what I think of him in plain language.

*Marinoni*. And refuse the princess's hand? Yet she looked at you in the most unmistakable manner all through dinner.

*The Prince*. Do you think so? I am in a maze of perplexity. Come along, though, let us go to the king.

*Marinoni* [*holding the coat*]. What shall I do, your highness?

*The Prince.* Put it on again for an instant; you shall give it back to me presently. They will be much more astonished to hear me take the tone that befits me, in this sober-colored garment.

*Exeunt.*

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SCENE VII. — *A Prison.*

FANTASIO.

*Fantasio.* I don't know whether there be a providence or not, but it is amusing to think so. Here was a poor little princess, on the point of being married, against her will, to an unclean beast, a provincial booby, on whose head chance had dropped a crown as the eagle let fall the tortoise on the pate of Æschylus. Everything was ready, the candles lighted, the bridegroom powdered, the poor little victim shriven. She had dried the two bright tears I saw her shed this morning. Nothing further was needed save a few mummeries to consummate her life-long misery. The peace of two nations, the happiness of two kingdoms, was at stake, — and I must needs take it into my head to dress myself up like a hunch-back, and come and get tipsy in our good king's buttery, to fish up the wig of his dear ally. Verily there is something superhuman about me when I am drunk. So here is the marriage broken off and the whole question reopened. The Prince of Mantua demands my head in exchange

for his wig; the King of Bavaria thinks the penalty rather severe, and will only consent to imprisonment. The Prince of Mantua is luckily so obstinate that he would rather be cut into pieces than recede, so the princess remains single for this time at least. If here is not matter for an epic in twelve cantos I am no judge. Pope and Boileau have written admired verses on far tamer themes. Ah! if I were a poet how I would paint that scene of the wig flying through the air! But he who achieves such feats disdains to record them, so posterity will have to do without it.

[*He falls asleep. Enter ELSBETH and her COMPANION with a lamp.*

*Elsbeth.* He is asleep. Shut the door softly.

*The Com.* See, there can be no doubt; he has taken off his wig, and his deformity has disappeared too; this is he, as his people behold him in his triumphal chariot, the noble Prince of Mantua!

*Elsbeth.* Yes, it is he! my curiosity is satisfied; I only wish to see his face; let me bend over him. [*She takes the lamp.*] Psyche, beware of the drop of oil!

*The Com.* He is as beautiful as a picture of our Lord!

*Elsbeth.* Why did you give me so many novels and fairy tales to read? Why did you sow the seeds of so many strange and mystic flowers in my poor brain?

*The Com.* How agitated you are, standing there on tiptoe.

*Elsbeth.* He wakes: let us go.

*Fantasio* [*waking*]. Am I dreaming? I hold the hem of a white robe!

*Elsbeth.* Let me go, let me go.

*Fantasio.* You here, princess! If it is to bring the fool's pardon that you come so angelically, let me put on my wig and hump again; it will not take a minute.

*The Com.* Ah prince! it ill becomes you to impose upon us thus! Do not resume the disguise we know all about.

*Fantasio.* Prince! where is he?

*The Com.* Why dissemble?

*Fantasio.* I am not dissembling the least in the world. Under what delusion do you call me prince?

*The Com.* I know my duty toward your highness.

*Fantasio.* Madam, I entreat you to explain this good lady's words. Is there really some absurd mistake, or am I the butt of a jest?

*Elsbeth.* Why do you ask, when you are jesting yourself?

*Fantasio.* Can it be that I am a prince by some accident? Does anybody suspect my mother's honor?

*Elsbeth.* Who are you, if not the Prince of Mantua?

*Fantasio.* My name is Fantasio; I am a citizen of Munich.

[*He shows her a letter.*]

*Elsbeth.* A citizen of Munich! And why did you disguise yourself? What are you doing here?

! *Fantasio* [*falling on his knees*]. Madam, I entreat your pardon!

*Elsbeth*. What do you mean? Get up, man, and be gone! I remit the punishment which you deserve, perhaps. What impelled you to such an act?

*Fantasio*. I cannot mention the motive which brought me here.

*Elsbeth*. You cannot tell it? But I choose to know it.

*Fantasio*. Excuse me; I dare not confess it.

*The Com.* Let us go, *Elsbeth*; do not expose yourself to hear unfitting language; this man is a robber, or some insolent wretch who will make love to you.

*Elsbeth*. I insist upon knowing why you assumed this costume?

*Fantasio*. Spare me, I entreat of you.

*Elsbeth*. Speak, or I close this door upon you for ten years.

*Fantasio*. Madam, I am hampered with debts; my creditors have a warrant out against me; at this very moment my furniture is under the hammer, and if I were not in this prison I should be in another. They were to arrest me yesterday evening; not knowing where to pass the night, nor how to keep out of the way of the sheriff, I took it into my head to don this dress and take refuge at the king's feet. If you set me at liberty they will lay hold of me. My uncle is a miser who lives on potatoes and radishes, and leaves me to starve to death in every tavern in the kingdom.

Since you insist upon knowing, I owe twenty thousand crowns.

*Elsbeth.* Is all this true?

*Fantasio.* If I lie, may I have to pay them.

[*A noise of horses is heard without.*]

*The Com.* There are horses passing! It is the king himself. If I could but beckon to a page. [*She calls from the window.*] Ho there, Flamel! where are you going?

*The Page* [*without*]. The Prince of Mantua is setting out.

*The Com.* The Prince of Mantua!

*The Page.* Yes, war is declared. There has been a terrible scene between him and the king, before the whole court, and the princess's marriage is broken off.

*Elsbeth.* Do you hear that, Mr. Fantasio? You have broken off my marriage.

*The Com.* Great heavens! The Prince of Mantua going and I have not seen him!

*Elsbeth.* What a calamity! War is declared.

*Fantasio.* Does your highness call that a calamity? Would you rather have a husband who goes to war about his wig? Ah madam, if there is a war we shall know what to do with our limbs; our loungers will put on their uniforms; I shall take my fowling-piece, if it is not sold. We shall have a trip to Italy, and if you ever enter Mantua it shall be as a real queen, and no need for any torches save our swords!

*Elsbeth.* Fantasio, will you continue to be my

father's jester? I will pay your twenty thousand crowns.

*Fantasio.* I would with all my heart, but, to tell the truth, if I were forced to do so, I should jump out of the window some fine morning and run away.

*Elsbeth.* But why? St. John is dead; we must positively have a fool.

*Fantasio.* I like the trade as well as another, but I am incapable of following any trade. If you consider my having rid you of the Prince of Mantua worth twenty thousand crowns, give them to me; don't pay my debts. A gentleman without debts would not know what to do with himself. It never entered my head to be out of debt.

*Elsbeth.* Well then, I will give them to you; but take the key of my garden, and the next time you are tired of being hunted by your creditors, come and hide among the field-flowers where I found you this morning. Be sure to wear your wig and motley dress; never appear before me without your hump and bells, for it is thus that you please me; you shall be my jester again for as long as you like, and then you can go about your own affairs. Now go, the door is open.

*The Com.* And the Prince of Mantua has really gone without my seeing him!



# NO TRIFLING WITH LOVE.

IN TWO ACTS.



## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE BARON.

PERDICAN, *his son.*

DOCTOR BLAZIUS, *Perdican's Tutor.*

DOCTOR BRIDAINÉ, *the Village Priest.*

CAMILLE, *the Baron's Niece.*

DAME PLUCHE, *her Governess.*

ROSETTE, *Camille's Foster-sister.*

PEASANTS, SERVANTS, *etc.*



# NO TRIFLING WITH LOVE.

IN TWO ACTS.

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## ACT I.

SCENE I. — *Village green before the gates of a country-seat.*

DOCTOR BLAZIUS, DAME PLUCHE, *Chorus.*

*Chorus.* Lo! through the flowery fields comes Doctor Blazius, nodding gently on his mule, in brand-new clothes, with his ink-horn by his side. He sways upon his round belly like a baby on a bolster. All hail, Doctor Blazius! you come in vintage-time, like an antique amphora.

*Doctor Blazius.* Whoever wishes to hear great news, bring me a glass of wine.

*Chorus.* Here is our biggest bowl; drink, Doctor Blazius, the wine is good; you can talk afterwards.

*Doctor Blazius.* Know then, my children, that the Baron's son, young Perdican, has just come of age and taken his degree in Paris. He is coming back to his father's house this very day, with his mouth full of such fine and flowery phrases that half the time

nobody knows how to reply. This accomplished person is like a golden book ; there is not a blade of grass of which he cannot tell you the Latin name, and when it rains or blows he can explain exactly why. You would open your eyes to see one of the parchments which he has decorated with his own hands in every shade of ink. In short, from head to foot he is like a rare diamond, and so I shall have the honor to tell the baron. Of course you perceive that this reflects some credit upon me, having been his preceptor since he was four years old ; so, my good friends, pray bring me a chair that I may dismount from this mule without breaking my neck,— the brute is a little restive, — and I should not mind drinking another mouthful before I go in.

*Chorus.* Drink and be merry Doctor Blazius. We have known little Perdican ever since he was born, and it was hardly worth while to tell us so much about him, especially as he is coming himself. We only hope we may still find the child in the man.

*Doctor Blazius.* Good lack ! the bowl is empty ! I did not mean to drink it all. Farewell ; as I jogged along, I prepared a few simple phrases, which will gratify the baron ; now I am going to ring.

[*Exit.*

*Chorus.* Here comes Dame Pluche plodding up the hill on her tired mule ; her groom, more dead than alive himself, cudgels the poor beast might and main, but it only shakes its head and munches a thistle. She

tells her beads with her skinny hands, and her long bony legs twitch with rage the while. Good day, Dame Pluche, you come like an autumn fever, with the wind that turns the woods yellow.

*Dame Pluche.* A glass of water, you boors! A glass of vinegar and water!

*Chorus.* Whence do you come, Dame Pluche, my dear? Your false front is covered with dust, it is a ruined wig, and your chaste garments have ridden up to your venerable knees.

*Dame Pluche.* Know then, rustics, that your master's niece, the beautiful Camille, is coming home to-day. She has left her convent at the baron's express order, to receive duly the handsome fortune her mother left her. Her education is finished, Heaven be praised, and those who have the privilege of seeing her will breathe an atmosphere of discretion and devoutness. There never was anything so pure, so angelic, so lamb-like, and so dove-like as this precious little nun. Heaven guard and guide her! Amen. Stand aside, clodpoles, my legs feel swollen.

*Chorus.* Smooth yourself out, good Pluche, and when you say your prayers ask for rain; our harvest-fields are as dry as your bones.

*Dame Pluche.* You have brought me water in a bowl that smells of the kitchen! Give me a hand to dismount; you are a pack of louts and bumpkins.

[*Exit.*

*Chorus.* Let us put on our Sunday clothes to be

ready when the baron summons us. There's junketing in the wind to-day.

[*Exeunt.*]

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SCENE II. — *The Baron's Study.*

*Enter* BARON, DOCTOR BRIDAINÉ, and DOCTOR BLAZIUS.

*Baron.* You are an old friend, Doctor Bridainé; let me present you to Doctor Blazius, my son's tutor. My son was just one-and-twenty yesterday morning at eight minutes past twelve; he is bachelor of arts, and graduated with first honors.

*Doctor Blazius* [*bowing*]. In the four great branches, my lord: philosophy, Roman law, canon law, and letters.

*Baron.* Go to your room, my dear Blazius, my son will be here anon; make yourself comfortable, and come back to us when the dinner-bell rings.

[*Exit* DOCTOR BLAZIUS.]

*Doctor Bridainé.* Shall I tell your lordship what I think? Your son's tutor smells strong of wine.

*Baron.* Impossible!

*Doctor Bridainé.* I would stake my life upon it; he was quite close to me just now, and he smelt frightfully of wine.

*Baron.* Don't say that again; I tell you it is impossible. [*Enter* DAME PLUCHE.] Ah! here you are, good Dame Pluche; my niece is with you of course.

*Dame Pluche.* She will be here anon, your lordship. I came on a little in advance.

*Baron.* Doctor Bridaine, my old friend, let me present you to Dame Pluche, my niece's governess. My niece reached the age of eighteen yesterday evening at seven o'clock. She has been brought up in the best convent in France. Dame Pluche, let me present my friend, Doctor Bridaine, our parish-priest.

*Dame Pluche* [*courtesying*]. In the best convent in France, your lordship, and, I might venture to add, is the best Christian in the convent.

*Baron.* Pray make haste and adjust your dress, Dame Pluche, my niece will be here soon, I hope, and be ready at dinner-time.

[*Exit DAME PLUCHE.*]

*Doctor Bridaine.* This elderly gentlewoman seems full of unction.

*Baron.* Full of unction and compunction, doctor ; her virtue is inflexible.

*Doctor Bridaine.* But the tutor smelt of wine, I am positive.

*Baron.* Doctor Bridaine, there are times when I almost doubt your friendship. Do you undertake to contradict me ? Not another word on the subject ! I have a plan to marry my son to my niece ; they are a ready-made pair ; their education has cost me six thousand crowns.

*Doctor Bridaine.* You must get a dispensation.

*Baron.* It is in my secretary, Bridaine ! Now, my good friend, you know how happy I am ! You know what a horror I have always had of solitude : but my

position and the dignity of my office compel me to remain in this country-house three months every winter and three every summer. One can do nothing for the happiness of mankind in general, and one's dependants in particular, without occasionally giving strict orders to admit nobody. The seclusion needful for a statesman is rigid and severe indeed, and what a pleasure it will be to have my two children near me to cheer the gloomy depression to which I have been a prey ever since his majesty graciously appointed me collector.

*Doctor Bridaine.* Will the wedding take place here or in Paris?

*Baron.* I expected that question; I was sure of it, Bridaine! Well, what would you say if those hands, your own hands,—don't look at them so piteously, Bridaine,—were destined to bestow the benediction upon the consummation of my dearest hopes? Eh?

*Doctor Bridaine.* I cannot speak; I am dumb with gratitude.

*Baron.* Look out of the window and see my people crowding to the gateway! My two children have arrived simultaneously, a most auspicious coincidence! I have arranged everything; my niece is to be shown in by this door on the left, my son by that on the right. What do you think of it? I shall enjoy seeing how they meet and what they say to each other; six thousand crowns is no trifle; it will not do to have it thrown away. Besides, these children have loved each

other dearly from their very cradles. Bridaine, I have an idea.

*Doctor Bridaine.* What is it? .

*Baron.* During dinner, — without seeming to make a point of it, you understand, — while the wine goes round, — you understand Latin, Bridaine?

*Doctor Bridaine.* *Ita ædepol*, by Jupiter I should think I do.

*Baron.* I should like you to challenge the young fellow before his cousin, — discreetly, you know; it cannot fail to have a good effect; make him speak Latin a little, — not during dinner exactly, that would be tiresome, for my part I don't understand a word of it, — but at dessert, you know.

*Doctor Bridaine.* If your lordship does not understand it, probably neither does your niece.

*Baron.* That's an additional motive. Don't you know a woman always admires what she does not understand? Where have you lived, Bridaine? Your argument is absurd.

*Doctor Bridaine.* I know little of women, but it seems to me it must be difficult to admire what one does not understand.

*Baron.* I know them, Bridaine, I know the bewitching and inexplicable creatures well! Depend upon it, they like nothing so much as having dust thrown in their eyes, and the more you throw the wider they open them! [*Enter PERDICAN R. and CAMILLE L.*] Welcome, children! welcome home, my

dear Camille, my dear Perdican ! kiss me and kiss each other.

*Perdican.* How are you, father ? and you, dear sister ? What joy ! How happy I am !

*Camille.* I hope you are both well.

*Perdican.* How tall you are, Camille ! and beautiful as the day.

*Baron.* When did you leave Paris, Perdican ?

*Perdican.* On Wednesday, I think, or Tuesday. Why, you are a woman ! Then I am a man, I suppose. It seems but yesterday that you were only so high.

*Baron.* You must be tired ; it is a long journey, and the day is warm.

*Perdican.* Bless me, no ! Father, how pretty Camille is !

*Baron.* Come, Camille, give your cousin a kiss.

*Camille.* Excuse me.

*Baron.* A compliment deserves a kiss ; kiss her, Perdican.

*Perdican.* As my cousin draws back when I offer my hand, I too must say, excuse me. Love may steal a kiss, but friendship may not.

*Camille.* Neither friendship nor love should accept what it cannot return.

*Baron* [*aside to* DOCTOR BRIDAINÉ]. Here's a bad beginning !

*Doctor Bridaine* [*aside to the* BARON]. Too much prudery is undoubtedly a fault, but marriage overcomes many scruples.

*Baron* [*as before*]. I am annoyed, — hurt. Her answer displeases me: ‘Excuse me.’ Did you notice that she crossed herself? Come away, I want to talk to you. I am pained to the last degree. This moment, to which I have been looking forward so long, is a complete disappointment. I am vexed and irritated. It is a devilish bad beginning.

*Doctor Bridaine.* Say something to them; they are turning their backs upon each other.

*Baron.* Well, children, what are you thinking about? What are you doing before that picture, Camille?

*Camille.* What a fine portrait, uncle! She was a great-aunt of ours, I think?

*Baron.* Yes, my dear, your great-grandmother, or rather your great-grandfather’s sister, for the good lady never contributed — I believe — to the increase of the family, — except by her prayers. She was a very holy woman.

*Camille.* Yes, yes, she was a saint! It is my aunt Isabel. How becoming the religious dress is to her!

*Baron.* And what are you about with that flower-pot, Perdican?

*Perdican.* What a lovely flower, father; it is a heliotrope.

*Baron.* You jest! it is no bigger than a fly.

*Perdican.* Yet this little flower no bigger than a fly has its worth.

*Doctor Bridaine.* Undoubtedly the young scholar

is right. Ask him to what order and class it belongs, what are its component elements, whence it derives its sap and color ; he will enrapture you by analyzing all the properties of the plant from the root to the blossom.

*Perdican.* I don't know all that, reverend sir : I know it smells sweet, and that's enough.



SCENE III. — *The green before the gates.*

*Enter CHORUS.*

A number of things amuse me and excite my curiosity just now. Come, let us all sit down under this walnut-tree. Two redoubtable eaters have encountered each other at the baron's house, Doctor Bridaine and Doctor Blazius. Have you never observed that when two men of the same stamp chance to meet, equally gross, equally stupid, with the same vices and passions, they must needs adore or execrate each other ? and since it is known that opposites attract, and a tall, dried-up man fancies a little, fat one, or fair people are fond of dark ones, I foresee a contest between the tutor and the priest. Both are equally armed with impudence, both have a tun for a stomach ; they are not only greedy, but fond of good living, and they will quarrel at dinner, not only about the quantity but the quality of their food. The fish is

small ; what is to be done ? and in any case a carp's tongue cannot be divided, nor can a carp have two tongues. *Item*, they are both great talkers, but to be sure, if it comes to the worst, they can both talk at once without listening to each other. Doctor Bridaine has already made several attempts to ask young Perdican a learned question, but the tutor has frowned ; he does not wish anybody but himself to exhibit his pupil. They are both in holy orders ; one gives himself airs about his parish, the other about his post. Doctor Blazius is the son's director ; Doctor Bridaine the father's. I can see them now, with their elbows on the table, cheeks flushed, eyes starting, wagging their double-chins with rage. They stare at each other from head to foot and begin by slight skirmishes ; war is declared, and they exchange every sort of rudeness. To crown all, Dame Pluche is seated between the two gluttons, and nudges them alternately with her sharp elbows to keep them at a distance. Now dinner is over and the great gateway is thrown open ; they are all coming out ; let us withdraw.

[*Exeunt. Enter BARON and DAME PLUCHE.*]

*Baron.* Respected Pluche, I am out of spirits.

*Dame Pluche.* Is it possible, my lord ?

*Baron.* Yes, Pluche, it is possible. For a long, long time I have expected — I had even put it down in my memorandum-book — that this would be the happiest day of my life, — yes, my good lady, the happiest. You know that I have always intended to marry my

son to my niece ; it was decided, — determined upon ; I had spoken to Bridaine about it ; and I see, or fancy I see, that these children treat each other coldly ; they have not exchanged a word.

*Dame Pluche.* Here they come, my lord. Do they know your intentions ?

*Baron.* I have privately hinted it to them. I think, as they are together, it would be a good plan to sit down under these friendly trees and leave them alone for a few minutes.

[Retires with DAME PLUCHE. Enter CAMILLE and PERDICAN.]

*Perdican.* Camille, do you know there was nothing pretty in refusing me a kiss ?

*Camille.* I can't help it ; that is my way.

*Perdican.* Will you take my arm and stroll through the village ?

*Camille.* No, I am tired.

*Perdican.* Don't you care to see the meadows again ? Do you remember our boating-parties ? Come down to the mills, and I will row you, and you shall steer.

*Camille.* I don't care about it, thank you.

*Perdican.* You wound me to the quick ! What, not one recollection, Camille ? Not one heart-throb for the scenes of our childhood, and all the good old times that were so sweet and full of delicious nonsense ? Won't you come and look at the path by which we used to go to the farm ?

*Camille.* Not this evening.

*Perdican.* Not this evening! Then when will you come? Is not our whole past life there?

*Camille.* I am no longer young enough to play with dolls nor old enough to live in the past.

*Perdican.* What do you mean?

*Camille.* I mean that I don't care for childish recollections.

*Perdican.* Do they bore you?

*Camille.* Yes, they bore me.

*Perdican.* Poor child! I pity you sincerely.

[*Exeunt by different sides. Enter BARON and DAME PLUCHE.*]

*Baron.* You saw and heard, good Pluche! I expected celestial harmony, and it is like being at a concert where the violin plays "*Joys that we've tasted,*" while the flute plays "*God save the King.*" Fancy the discord! Well, that is a perfect illustration of the condition of my heart.

*Dame Pluche.* I must say that I cannot blame Camille; in my opinion nothing is in worse taste than boating-parties.

*Baron.* Are you in earnest?

*Dame Pluche.* My lord, no young girl, with any self-respect, would venture upon the water.

*Baron.* But pray remember, Dame Pluche, that she and her cousin are to be married, and that being the case —

*Dame Pluche.* The laws of society do not permit of her steering, and it is very unbecoming to leave *terra firma* with a young man.

*Baron.* But I tell you — but I repeat —

*Dame Pluche.* That is my opinion.

*Baron.* Are you out of your senses? Indeed, you will force me to say — there are terms which I don't wish to make use of — which are offensive — But you really — in short, if I did not exercise the greatest self-command — You are an old goose, Pluche, and I don't know what to make of you!

[Exit.

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SCENE IV. — *The village-green.*

CHORUS, PERDICAN.

*Perdican.* Good-day, old friends! Do you know me?

*Chorus.* My lord, you look like a child we loved dearly.

*Perdican.* You used to carry me over the brooks on your back, trot me on your knees, take me behind you on horseback, and crowd together to make room for me at the farm supper.

*Chorus.* Yes, your lordship, we remember it all; you were the greatest scamp and the dearest boy on earth.

*Perdican.* Then why don't you give me a hug, instead of bowing as if I were a stranger?

*Chorus.* God bless you, child of our heart, we all long to take you in our arms, but we have grown old, and your lordship has grown up.

*Perdican.* Yes, it is ten years since I have seen you, and one day suffices to change everything under the sun. I have shot up a few feet nearer the sky, and you have bent a few inches nearer to the grave. Your heads have grown white, your step has grown slack, you can no longer carry him whom you used to call your child. It is my turn to be a father to you, you who used to be like fathers to me.

*Chorus.* Your return home is a happier day than the day of your birth! There is more joy in having what one loves back again than in welcoming a new-born babe.

*Perdican.* Ah! here is my favorite valley, my walnut-trees, my green foot-path, and my little spring! Here are all my by-gone days as fresh and full of life as ever; here is the mystic region of my childish dreams! Oh home, home! Indefinable word! is not man born for his own corner of the earth, there to build his nest and live his little day!

*Chorus.* We hear that your lordship is very learned.

*Perdican.* So they say. The sciences are fine things, but these fields and trees proclaim something finer still,—how to forget all that one has learned.

*Chorus.* There has been more than one change since you went away. Some of the girls have married, and young men have gone to the war.

*Perdican.* You must tell me all about it. I expect to find many changes, but to tell the truth I don't

want to know of them yet. How small this basin is! In old times it used to look immense! I carried away the impression of an ocean and vast forests, and I only find a drop of water and some blades of grass. Who is the young girl singing at her window behind those trees?

*Chorus.* Rosette, your cousin Camille's foster-sister.

*Perdican.* Come down quick, Rosette, and come here.

*Rosette* [*as she enters*]. Yes, your lordship.

*Perdican.* Are you married, child? They told me so.

*Rosette.* Oh no.

*Perdican.* And why not? You are the prettiest girl in the village. We must find you a husband, my dear.

*Chorus.* Your lordship, she wishes to die a maiden.

*Perdican.* Is that true, Rosette?

*Rosette.* Oh no indeed.

*Perdican.* Your sister Camille has come. Have you seen her?

*Rosette.* No, she has not been here yet.

*Perdican.* Go, make haste and put on your best gown, and come up to supper at the hall.

SCENE V. — *An apartment.*

*Enter the BARON and DOCTOR BLAZIUS.*

*Doctor Blazius.* My lord, I have a word to say to you ; your parish priest is a sot.

*Baron.* Oh fie ! it can't be.

*Doctor Blazius.* I assure you it is so ; he drank three bottles of wine at dinner.

*Baron.* That was immoderate.

*Doctor Blazius.* When we came out from dinner he walked on the flower-borders.

*Baron.* On the borders ? I am amazed ! It is very strange ! Drank three bottles of wine at dinner and walked on the borders ! I can't understand it. Why didn't he walk on the gravel ?

*Doctor Blazius.* Because he could not walk straight.

*Baron [aside].* I begin to think Bridaine was right this morning. Blazius smells of wine most offensively.

*Doctor Blazius.* Moreover, he eat enormously ; he could hardly speak.

*Baron.* To tell the truth I noticed that myself.

*Doctor Blazius.* He spoke a few words of Latin, and they were all solecisms. He is a depraved man, your lordship.

*Baron [aside].* Pah ! Blazius smells intolerably !  
*[Aloud].* Doctor, I have other things to think of than what is eaten or drunk at my table. I am not the butler.

*Doctor Blazius.* God forbid I should annoy your lordship. Your wine is very good.

*Baron.* My cellar is good.

[Enter DOCTOR BRIDAINE.]

*Doctor Bridaine.* My lord, your son is on the green — followed by all the scape-graces in the village.

*Baron.* Impossible!

*Doctor Bridaine.* I saw him with my own eyes. He was picking up pebbles to skim on the water.

*Baron.* Pebbles to skim on the water! I am bewildered; all my ideas are upset. What you say is absurd, Bridaine; who ever heard of a bachelor of arts skipping stones?

*Doctor Bridaine.* Look out of the window, my lord, and you can see for yourself.

*Baron* [aside]. Good heavens! Blazius was right! Bridaine can't walk straight.

*Doctor Bridaine.* Look, your lordship; there he is beside the basin with his arm around one of the village-girls.

*Baron.* One of the village-girls! Has my son come home to corrupt my tenantry? His arm round a village girl, and all the scape-graces in the place at his heels! I shall lose my wits.

*Doctor Bridaine.* This calls for vengeance.

*Baron.* Everything is ruined, — ruined past all hope! I am ruined! Blazius smells horribly of wine, Bridaine can't walk straight, and my son is seducing the village-girls and skipping stones on the pond.

[Exit.]

## ACT II.

SCENE I. — *The Garden.*

*Enter DOCTOR BLAZIUS and PERDICAN.*

*Doctor Blazius.* My lord, your father is in despair.

*Perdican.* And why?

*Doctor Blazius.* You are aware that he had planned a marriage between you and your cousin.

*Perdican.* Well? I should like nothing better.

*Doctor Blazius.* But his lordship thinks that your characters do not harmonize.

*Perdican.* That's unlucky, as I can't remake mine.

*Doctor Blazius.* And will you let the marriage fall through on that account?

*Perdican.* I repeat that I should like nothing better than to marry Camille. Go tell my father so.

*Doctor Blazius.* I go, my lord; here comes your cousin.

[*Exit.* *Enter CAMILLE.*

*Perdican.* Up so early, cousin? I am still of the same opinion that I was yesterday; you are as pretty as a rose.

*Camille.* Perdican, let us be serious. Your father wishes us to be married. I don't know what your sentiments are on this subject, but I think it right to tell you that my mind is made up.

*Perdican.* Unlucky for me, if you don't like me.

*Camille.* I like you as well I do anybody ; I do not mean to marry. There is nothing in that to wound your pride.

*Perdican.* I have nothing to do with pride ; I care for neither its pleasures nor its pains.

*Camille.* I came hither only to receive my mother's property ; to-morrow I go back to the convent.

*Perdican.* You are frank, at least ; shake hands and let us be friends.

*Camille.* I dislike shaking hands.

*Perdican* [*taking her hand*]. Give me your hand, Camille, do. What are you afraid of? You don't wish to marry me ; well — we won't be married, but that is no reason for our hating each other. Are we not brother and sister? When your mother directed this marriage in her will, she wished to insure our lasting attachment, that was all. Why should we be married? Here is your hand and here is mine ; we need no priest to join them in a clasp that shall hold till our latest breath. We need God's blessing alone.

*Camille.* I am glad that my refusal is a matter of indifference to you.

*Perdican.* It is not a matter of indifference, Camille. Your love would have been the joy of my life, but your friendship will console me for its loss. Do not go away to-morrow ; yesterday you would not stroll round the garden because you looked upon me as a husband who was being imposed upon you. Stay a few days and let me see that our past life is not utterly dead in your heart.

*Camille.* I am obliged to go.

*Perdican.* Why?

*Camille.* That is a secret.

*Perdican.* Are you in love with somebody else?

*Camille.* No, but I must go.

*Perdican.* Positively?

*Camille.* Yes, positively.

*Perdican.* Well then, farewell. I should have liked to spend a friendly hour or two with you under the chestnut-trees of our little wood, but as you do not wish it, we will say no more about it; farewell, dear child.

[Exit. Enter DAME PLUCHE.]

*Camille.* Dame Pluche, is everything ready? Can we start to-morrow? Has my guardian done looking over the accounts?

*Dame Pluche.* Yes, dear, spotless dove. The baron called me an old goose last night, and I am only too glad to be off.

*Camille.* Stop, I want you to give my cousin Perdican this line from me, before dinner.

*Dame Pluche.* Good heavens! is it possible? Send a note to a young man!

*Camille.* Was I not to be his wife? I may certainly write to my betrothed.

*Dame Pluche.* Lord Perdican has just left you; what can you have to write to him about? Your betrothed, did you say, in Heaven's name? Have you forgotten Jesus?

*Camille.* Do as I tell you, and have everything ready for our journey. [Exeunt.]

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SCENE II. — *The dining-room. Servants are setting the table.*

*Enter DOCTOR BRIDAINÉ.*

*Doctor Bridaine.* Yes, they are going to give him the place of honor again to-day. This seat beside the baron, which has been mine so long, will be the tutor's prey. Oh wretched man that I am! An ass, a shameless drunkard, shoves me down to the foot of the table! The butler will pour out the first glass of Malaga for him, the dishes will be half cold before they reach me, and the tit-bits will be gone; there will be no sauce left round the partridge. Oh holy Catholic Church! There was a reason for giving him the place yesterday; he had just arrived, and it was the first time for a number of years that he had sat at this table. Good Lord, how he ate! He left nothing but the bones of the roast fowl. I will not swallow such an affront. Farewell, ancient arm-chair, in which I have so often leaned back, replete with savory food! Farewell, rare bottles! fragrant fumes of well-cooked venison! Farewell, sumptuous table! noble dining-hall where I shall never say grace again! I go back to my parish; I shall never more be seen among the crowd of guests; for, like Cæsar, I choose to be first in the village rather than second in Rome.

SCENE III. — *Grass-plot before a cottage.*

*Enter ROSETTE and PERDICAN.*

*Perdican.* Come and take a walk, as your mother is not at home.

*Rosette.* Do you think all these kisses do me any good?

*Perdican.* What harm can they do? I would kiss you before your mother. Are you not Camille's sister? Am I not your brother as much as hers?

*Rosette.* Words are words, but kisses are kisses. I am not clever, and I find it out whenever I try to say anything. Fine ladies know what is meant if their right hand is kissed, or their left; a father kisses one on the forehead, brothers on the cheek, one's sweetheart on the lips; as for me, everybody kisses me on both cheeks, and I don't like it.

*Perdican.* How pretty you are, child.

*Rosette.* But you must not be angry. How low-spirited you are this morning. Is your engagement broken off?

*Perdican.* The villagers remember that they used to love me; — the trees of the wood, nay, the very farm-dogs remember it, but Camille does not. And when does your marriage come off, Rosette?

*Rosette.* Don't let us talk about that. Let us talk about the beautiful weather, and the flowers, and your horses, and my caps.

*Perdican.* Of anything you like, — anything that will not banish from your lips that celestial smile which I respect more than my life.

[*Kisses her.*]

*Rosette.* You respect my smile, but it don't seem to me you respect my lips much. Why look! here's a drop of rain on my hand, and yet the sky is clear.

*Perdican.* I beg your pardon.

*Rosette.* Oh, what have I done to make you cry?

[*Exeunt.*]

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SCENE IV. — *A room in the great house.*

*Enter the BARON and DOCTOR BLAZIUS.*

*Doctor Blazius.* My lord, I have something very odd to tell you. Just now I happened to be in the buttery — in the gallery I mean; what should I be doing in the buttery? — where I happened to find a bottle of wine, — a decanter of water I mean; how could I find a bottle of wine in the gallery? — well, I was in the act of swallowing a glass of wine — of water I should say — to pass the time, and chancing to look out of the window between two flower vases which struck me as modern, though they are in imitation of the Etruscan —

*Baron.* What an insufferable style of conversation you have adopted, Blazius! Nobody can understand you.

*Doctor Blazius.* I beg your lordship to listen to me a moment. As I was saying, I was looking out of the window, — don't lose your temper, for Heaven's sake, your lordship, the honor of your family is involved.

*Baron.* The honor of my family! What am I to understand by this? The honor of my family, Blazius? Why, do you know there are thirty-seven males and nearly as many females of us, counting Paris and the provinces.

*Doctor Blazius.* Permit me to continue. As I was drinking a glass of wine — of water I mean — to assist my digestion, I saw Dame Pluche go by, all out of breath.

*Baron.* Out of breath, Blazius? That is not very likely.

*Doctor Blazius.* And at her side your niece Camille, red with anger.

*Baron.* Who was red with anger, my niece, or Dame Pluche?

*Doctor Blazius.* Your niece, my lord.

*Baron.* My niece! This is monstrous! And pray how do you know it was with anger? She might have twenty reasons for being red. She may have been running after butterflies in the garden.

*Doctor Blazius.* I cannot affirm that she had not; perhaps she had; but she exclaimed vehemently: "Go find him! do as I bid you! you are a fool! It *shall* be done, do you hear?" And she rapped Dame

Pluche on the elbow with her fan, while at each adjuration the respected lady made a hop in the clover.

*Baron.* In the clover! And what did my niece's governess say to her folly, — for such conduct deserves no other name.

*Doctor Blazius.* She replied: "I won't go! I can't find him! He is making love to the village-girls and the wenches who look after the turkeys. I am too old to begin to carry love-letters. Thank God my hands have always been clean of such work till now!" And as she spoke she crushed a three-cornered note in her hands.

*Baron.* I can make nothing of it all. Why should Dame Pluche crush a three-cornered note in her hands and hop in the clover?

*Doctor Blazius.* Don't you see what it all means, my lord?

*Baron.* No indeed, my good friend, I don't understand a word of it. It is all very unbecoming conduct, but seems as causeless as it is inexcusable.

*Doctor Blazius.* It means that your niece has a clandestine correspondence.

*Baron.* What! Do you recollect to whom you are speaking? Weigh your words, sir!

*Doctor Blazius.* I do weigh my words in the celestial scales in which I shall be weighed myself at the last day, and there is not a false one among them. Your niece has a clandestine correspondence.

*Baron.* But consider, my dear friend, it is not possible.

*Doctor Blazius.* Then why did she give her governess a note and cry, "Find him!" while the other pouted and demurred?

*Baron.* And to whom was the letter addressed?

*Doctor Blazius.* That is precisely the *hic*, my lord; *hic jacet lepus*. To whom was the letter addressed? To a man who courts turkey-girls. Now a man who courts turkey-girls may be strongly suspected of being born to drive turkeys himself. But it is impossible that your niece, with her education, should fall in love with such a person. That is all I have to say, and I am no more able to understand it than your lordship appears to be, — with all due respect be it spoken.

*Baron.* Great Heavens! my niece told me this morning that she would not marry her cousin Perdican. Can it be because she is in love with a fellow who takes care of turkeys? Let us go into my study. I have had so many violent shocks since yesterday that I cannot collect my thoughts.

[*Exeunt.*]

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SCENE V. — *A forest spring.*

*Enter PERDICAN, reading a note.*

*Perdican.* "Meet me at noon, by the little spring." What can this mean? An appointment, after such

coldness, such a cruel rejection, such heartless pride? If it is to speak of business, why choose such a spot. Can it be coquetry? This morning, while I was walking with Rosette, I heard something rustle in the bushes, which I took for a fawn. Is she playing a game?

[Enter CAMILLE.]

*Camille.* Good day, cousin. I may have been mistaken, but I fancied that you went away from me this morning sad. You took my hand against my will, — will you give me yours now? I refused you a kiss, I will give you one. [*Kisses him.*] Now you said you would like to have a friendly talk with me. Sit down here and let us talk.

[*Sits herself.*]

*Perdican.* Was I dreaming before or am I dreaming now?

*Camille.* You must have thought it odd of me to send you a note; I am rather capricious in my moods, but this morning you said very rationally: "If we must part, let us part friends." You do not know why I go away and I have come here to tell you; I am going to take the veil.

*Perdican.* Is it possible? Is this you, Camille, whom I see reflected in the spring, sitting among the daisies, as in old times?

*Camille.* Yes, Perdican, it is I; I have come back to the old life for a little while. I struck you as rude, and repelling; the explanation is perfectly simple. I

have renounced the world. Before I leave it, however, I should like to have your opinion. Do you think I am right to become a nun?

*Perdican.* Don't ask me, for I shall never be a monk myself.

*Camille.* You have had some experience of life during the ten years that we have been separated. I know what sort of man you are, and that you must have learned a great deal in a short time with a heart and mind like yours; tell me, have you had mistresses?

*Perdican.* Why do you ask?

*Camille.* Pray answer me, without reserve or vanity.

*Perdican.* I have.

*Camille.* Did you love them?

*Perdican.* With my whole heart.

*Camille.* What has become of them? Do you know?

*Perdican.* Upon my word, these are peculiar questions. What do you expect me to say? I was neither their husband nor their brother; they have gone where they pleased.

*Camille.* But you must have cared for one more than the rest. How long were you in love with the one you loved best?

*Perdican.* You are a strange girl! Do you wish to play confessor?

*Camille.* I ask you as a favor to tell me. You are

not dissipated, and I believe that you are good at heart. You must have inspired love, for you are created for it, — and you would not be ruled by mere caprice. Answer me, I beg.

*Perdican.* Upon my word, I don't remember.

*Camille.* Do you know a man who has been in love with only one woman?

*Perdican.* There certainly are such men.

*Camille.* Are there among your friends? Tell me his name.

*Perdican.* I have no name to tell you, but I believe that there are men capable of loving but once.

*Camille.* How often can a true man be in love?

*Perdican.* Do you wish me to repeat a litany, or are you repeating a catechism yourself?

*Camille.* I wish for information; I wish to know whether I am right or wrong in entering a convent. If I were to marry you, would you not be bound to answer all my questions, and show me your very heart? I have a high opinion of you, and I believe you to be superior to most men of your age both by nature and education. I am sorry that you don't remember what I ask you; perhaps if I knew you better I should have more courage.

*Perdican.* What are you trying to find out? Tell me, and I will answer you.

*Camille.* Then answer my first question; am I right to go back to the convent?

*Perdican.* No.

*Camille.* Should I do better to marry you?

*Perdican.* Yes.

*Camille.* If the priest were to breathe upon a glass of water and tell you that it was wine, would you drink it as such?

*Perdican.* No.

*Camille.* Then if the priest were to breathe upon you, and tell me that you would love me as long as you live, should I believe him?

*Perdican.* Yes, and no.

*Camille.* What should I do when I found that you did not love me any longer?

*Perdican.* Take a lover.

*Camille.* And what when my lover loved me no longer?

*Perdican.* Take another.

*Camille.* And how long would that go on?

*Perdican.* Until your hair was gray, by which time mine would be white.

*Camille.* Do you know what the cloister is, Perdican? Did you ever sit for a whole day on a convent bench?

*Perdican.* Yes, I have.

*Camille.* I have a friend among the sisters who is but thirty years old, and who at fifteen had an income of five hundred thousand francs. She is the most beautiful and noble creature that ever trod the earth. She was a peeress in her own right, and her husband was one of the most distinguished men in France.

Every noble human faculty was cultivated in her, and like a generous tree, every bud bore fruit. Never did love and happiness crown a fairer brow ; her husband deceived her, she loved another man, and she is dying of despair.

*Perdican.* Very possibly.

*Camille.* We shared the same cell, and I have passed whole nights talking of her griefs ; they almost became my own. It is strange, is it not ? I hardly know how to account for it. When she spoke of her marriage, and told me of its early rapture, then the calm that succeeded, and how at last everything faded, — how in the evening she used to sit by the fire, and he at the window, without exchanging a word, — how their love languished, and every effort to rekindle it ended only in discord, — how by degrees another face came between them, and grew identified with their unhappiness, — I seemed to see myself. When she said, “I was happy,” my heart would beat, and when she said, “I wept,” my own tears flowed. But there was something stranger still ; — only think, I ended by creating an imaginary life for myself ; it lasted four years ; it would be useless to attempt to tell you how much reflection and introspection brought it all about ; what I wished to tell you, as merely curious, is that all Louise’s recollections, and all my own dreams and fancies, took your image.

*Perdican.* My image ?

*Camille.* Yes ; that was natural enough, as you are

the only man I ever knew. Indeed, I have loved you, Perdican.

*Perdican.* How old are you, Camille ?

*Camille.* Eighteen.

*Perdican.* Go on, go on ; I am listening.

*Camille.* There are two hundred women in our convent ; a few of these women have never known life ; all the rest are awaiting death. More than one of them has left the convent like me to-day, pure and full of hope. Erelong they returned, aged and broken-hearted. Every day at least one dies in our dormitories, and every day some one else comes to take her place on the hard pallet. Strangers who visit the convent admire the quiet and order of the establishment, and remark how white our veils are ; they do not ask why we drop them over our eyes. What do you think of these women, Perdican ? Are they right or wrong ?

*Perdican.* I don't know.

*Camille.* Some of them have advised me not to marry. I am glad to have the opportunity of asking you what you think. Do you think these women would have done better to take lovers, and to advise me to do so ?

*Perdican.* I don't know.

*Camille.* You promised to answer me.

*Perdican.* I am absolved from that promise, for I don't believe it is you who are speaking.

*Camille.* Very likely ; no doubt most of my ideas

are ridiculous ; very possibly I have been taught them all by rote, and am merely an ill-trained parrot. There is a little picture in the gallery of a monk bending over a missal ; a faint sunbeam struggles through the bars of his cell, and without one sees an Italian tavern before which a goat-herd is dancing. Which of these men do you respect most ?

*Perdican.* Neither, and both. They are merely two ordinary men, one of whom is reading, the other dancing ; I see nothing else in it. You are quite right to take the veil.

*Camille.* Just now you said I was not.

*Perdican.* Did I ? Very possibly.

*Camille.* So you advise me to do so ?

*Perdican.* So you don't believe in anything ?

*Camille.* Look me in the face, *Perdican*. Does the man live who does not believe in anything ?

*Perdican* [*rising*]. I do not ; I do not believe in life eternal. — My dear sister, the nuns have given you their experience, but trust me, it will not be yours ; you will not die without having loved.

*Camille.* I mean to love, but I do not mean to suffer ; I mean to love with an immortal love, and vows which will never be broken. This is my love.

[*Holds up a crucifix.*]

*Perdican.* That love does not exclude others.

*Camille.* It will for me. Do not smile, *Perdican* ! It is ten years since we have met, and to-morrow we part ; if we meet in ten years more we will speak of

this again. I did not wish to dwell in your memory only as a cold statue, for absence of feeling too makes people what I am. Listen ; go back to the world, and as long as you can be happy and love after the fashion of this world, forget your sister Camille ; but if ever the time should come when you forget, or are yourself forgotten, if ever the angel of hope should desert you and you find yourself alone upon earth with emptiness in your heart, think of her who prays for you.

*Perdican.* You are too self-confident, — take heed to yourself.

*Camille.* And wherefore ?

*Perdican.* You are eighteen years old, and you do not believe in love !

*Camille.* Do you believe in it yourself ? I see you kneeling there on the same knees which have worn out the carpets of mistresses whose very names you have forgotten. You have wept for joy and despair, but you never forgot that the rills would flow longer than your tears, and always be there to wash them away. You pursue your calling of a man of pleasure and smile when you hear of broken-hearted women ; you don't believe in dying of love, you who have loved and lived. What is the world, then ? I think you must cordially despise the women who are willing to take you as you are, and dismiss their last lover to call you to their arms, with another's kisses still warm on your lips ! I asked you just now if you had ever been in love, and you answered me like a traveller

who is asked if he has ever been in Italy, or Germany, and says : " Yes, I have been there, and I am thinking of going to Switzerland, or somewhere else, just as it may chance." Is your love like a piece of money, changing hands as long as you live? No, it is not even like that ; the smallest coin is better than you, for no matter through what hands it passes, it keeps its own stamp.

*Perdican.* How beautiful you are, Camille, when your eyes kindle.

*Camille.* Yes, I know I am beautiful, but I shall not hear it from compliment-mongers ; the frigid nun will turn pale, perhaps, as she cuts off my hair, but it will never be made into rings and chains to be sported in boudoirs ; not a single lock will be missing when I yield it to the steel ; the scissors shall touch it but once, and when the priest who blesses me places the gold ring of my celestial spouse upon my finger, he may make a cloak of the tresses I lose.

*Perdican.* You are really angry.

*Camille.* I was foolish to say anything, — my whole life is upon my lips. Oh Perdican ! do not sneer : it is all mortally sad.

*Perdican.* My poor child, I let you go on, but I should like very much to say a word myself. You speak of a sister who seems to have had a most fatal influence over you. You say she was deceived, that she deceived in turn, and that she is in despair. Are you sure that if her husband or her lover were to

stretch his hand to her through the convent-grating, she would not reach forth her own ?

*Camille.* What do you say ? I hardly understood.

*Perdican.* Are you certain that if her husband or her lover were to come back, and bid her suffer again, she would refuse ?

*Camille.* I believe she would.

*Perdican.* There are two hundred women in your convent, and the greater number of them have wounds in their hearts which never heal ; they have made you touch them ; they have colored your virgin thoughts with their life-blood. They have known life, you say, and they have shown you the paths they trod, with horror ; you have crossed yourself before their scars, as if they were the sacred wounds of Christ ; they have led you in their funereal processions, and you press against their haggard forms with holy horror when a man passes. Are you sure that if it were the man who betrayed them, the man through whom they weep and suffer, and whom they execrate in their very prayers, — are you quite sure that they would not burst their chains and fly back to their by-gone sorrows, and press the very dagger that smote them into their still bleeding breasts ? Oh child, child, do you understand the dreams of those women who tell you not to dream ? Do you know the name they murmur when the sacrament touches their quivering lips ? Do you guess what manner of women these are, who sit down and shake their heads, and pour their poisoned life-

stream into your young ears, and sound the tocsin of their own despair amid the ruins of your youth, and chill your warm blood with the grave-damps from their tombs? Do you know what they are?

*Camille.* You frighten me, — you are angry, too.

*Perdican.* Do you know what these nuns are, wretched girl? When they tell you that human love is a lie, do they forget that there is a worse lie — the mockery of love divine? Do they not know that it is a crime to whisper their corrupt experience in a vestal's ear? Ah! they have trained you but too well! I foresaw it all when you stopped before our great-aunt's picture. You would have gone away without touching my hand, without seeing this wood, or this little spring, which is watching us with tears in its eyes; you disowned your childish days, and the plaster mask the nuns have put on your face would have refused me a brother's kiss. But despite yourself, your heart beat, — that heart which cannot read for itself forgot its lesson, and you came back to rest on this turf. Well, Camille, those women have done you good service, they have put you on the right track; it may cost me my life-long happiness; yet tell them this from me: Heaven is not for them.

*Camille.* Nor for me either, you mean.

*Perdican.* Farewell, Camille; go back to your convent, and when they tell you the hideous tales with which they have poisoned you already, say what I tell you now: All men are false, boasters, liars, deceivers,

hypocrites, arrogant, cowardly, contemptible, sensual ; all women artificial, vain, inquisitive, perfidious, and depraved ; the world is a bottomless sewer where shapeless monsters writhe and crawl amid mountains of slime, — but if there is one great and sacred thing in existence, it is the union of two of these imperfect, horrible beings. A man may often be deceived, wounded, and miserable ; but if he loves, he can pause on the brink of the grave and look back and say : “ I have often suffered, and sometimes erred, but I have loved ; it is *I* who have lived, and not a factitious creature of my vanity and weariness.”

[*Exit.*]

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### ACT III.

#### SCENE I. — *The green before the gates.*

*Enter the BARON and DOCTOR BLAZIUS.*

*Baron.* Not to speak of your drunkenness, you are a beast, Doctor Blazius. My servants have seen you sneak into the wine-cellar, and when convicted of pilfering my bottles in the most shameful manner, you try and justify yourself by accusing my niece of a clandestine correspondence.

*Doctor Blazius.* But if your lordship will only deign to recollect —

*Baron.* Leave the house, sir ! and never let me see

your face again ; there is no excuse for your conduct, and my dignity forbids me ever to pardon it.

[*Exit* DOCTOR BLAZIUS. BARON *follows him.* *Enter* PERDICAN.

*Perdican.* I should really like to know whether I am in love. To begin with, what questions she asks for a girl of eighteen ! besides, it would be difficult to correct the notions with which those nuns have filled her head ; moreover, she is going away to-day. The deuce ! I am in love with her, that's certain. After all, who knows ? Perhaps she was only reciting something she had learned by rote ; but then she evidently cares nothing for me. She may be as pretty as she pleases, too, but that does not alter the fact that her style is much too decided, and her manner too abrupt. I will just think no more about it ; it is clear to me that I am not in love with her. She certainly is very pretty, — but why can't I drive that talk we had yesterday out of my head ? In fact, I was maundering all night. Where was I going ? Oh yes, to the village.

[*Exit.*



## SCENE II. — *A lane.*

*Enter* DOCTOR BRIDAINE.

*Doctor Bridaine.* What are they about now ? Alas, it is noon, and they are dining ! What is there for dinner ? What isn't there ! I saw the cook

cross the village, carrying a large turkey, and the scullion followed with truffles and a basket of grapes.

[Enter DOCTOR BLAZIUS.]

*Doctor Blazius.* Oh unexpected disgrace! Turned out of the house, and consequently out of the dining-room! I shall drink no more wine in that cellar.

*Doctor Bridaine.* I shall see no more smoking dishes! Never more shall I warm my ample person before that noble fire-place!

*Doctor Blazius.* Why did I let my accursed curiosity induce me to play eavesdropper to Dame Pluche and the niece? Why did I repeat what I overheard to the baron?

*Doctor Bridaine.* Why did I let false pride drive me from that board where I was so welcome? What did the right or the left-hand seat matter?

*Doctor Blazius.* Alack a day! I must own I was tipsy when I made such a fool of myself.

*Doctor Bridaine.* Alack a day! the wine had gone to my head when I was so hasty.

*Doctor Blazius.* Why, isn't this the priest?

*Doctor Bridaine.* Here's the tutor.

*Doctor Blazius.* Ho! your reverence, where are you going?

*Doctor Bridaine.* I? I'm going to dinner. Aren't you?

*Doctor Blazius.* Not to-day. Oh Doctor Bridaine, do intercede for me; the baron has turned me out of his house. I falsely accused Miss Camille of

carrying on a clandestine correspondence, though I call Heaven to witness I saw or thought I saw Dame Pluche hopping in the clover. I am ruined, your reverence !

*Doctor Bridaine.* What do I hear ?

*Doctor Blazius.* Alas, you hear the truth ! I am in utter disgrace for stealing a bottle of wine.

*Doctor Bridaine.* What are you talking about ? Stolen bottles of wine, hopping in the clover, and clandestine correspondences ?

*Doctor Blazius.* Pray do intercede for me. I mean you well, Doctor Bridaine ; good Doctor Bridaine, I am your humble servant.

*Doctor Bridaine.* Oh what luck ! Am I dreaming ; shall I sit in you again, blessed arm-chair ?

*Doctor Blazius.* I should be a thousand times obliged, my dear doctor, if you would listen to my story, and plead my cause.

*Doctor Bridaine.* I am sorry, sir, but it is impossible ; it is past twelve and I am going to dinner. If the baron is displeased with you, it is your own fault ; I cannot espouse the cause of a drunkard. [*Aside.*] Come, let's be off to the house, and thou, oh belly ! expand thyself.

[*Exit, running.*]

*Doctor Blazius.* Wretched Pluche !. you shall pay for this ; yes, you shameless woman, you vile go-between, I owe my disgrace to you. Oh holy University of Paris ! I am called a drunkard ! I shall be

ruined if I don't get hold of a letter, and prove to the baron that his niece has a clandestine correspondence. I saw her at her writing-desk this morning. Good! here is something now. [*Enter DAME PLUCHE, carrying a letter.*] Pluche, give me that letter.

*Dame Pluche.* And why, pray? It is a letter of my young lady's which I am taking to mail in the village.

*Doctor Blazius.* Give it to me, or you are a dead woman!

*Dame Pluche.* A dead woman! Oh Mary! Jesus! Virgin and martyr!

*Doctor Blazius.* Yes, a dead woman! Give me the letter!

[*They scuffle. Enter PERDICAN.*]

*Perdican.* What's the matter? What are you about, Blazius? Let that woman alone.

*Dame Pluche.* Give me back the letter! He took it from me, my lord! Justice!

*Doctor Blazius.* She is a vile go-between, your lordship. It is a love-letter.

*Dame Pluche.* It is a letter of your cousin Camille's, my lord.

*Doctor Blazius.* It is a love-letter to a turkey-driver.

*Dame Pluche.* That's a lie! Take that!

*Perdican.* Give me the letter. I know nothing about your quarrel, but as Camille's future husband I claim the right of seeing it. [*Reads.*] "To Sister

Louise, Convent of——.” [*Aside.*] What infernal curiosity seizes me? My heart beats violently, and I can hardly define my sensations. Go home, Dame Pluche; you are a good woman, and Doctor Blazius is a fool; go to your dinner; I will mail the letter. [*Exeunt.*] What can Camille have to say to this sister? Can I be in love? How has this strange girl gained such empire over me that a few words in her writing make my hand tremble? The seal has been broken in the scuffle! Is it a crime to open it? At all events, here goes.

[*Opens the letter and reads.*]

“I leave here to-day, my dearest, and everything has turned out as I foresaw. It is a terrible thing to say, but the poor boy is pierced to the heart; he will never get over losing me. Yet I have done everything in my power to disgust him with me. God forgive me for having driven him to despair. Alas, dear friend, what else could I do? Pray for me; to-morrow we shall be together once more and forever. Yours with my whole soul,

CAMILLE.”

What! Can Camille have written this? Does she speak of me in such a way? I in despair? Good Lord! if it were true, I should not deny it; there is no disgrace in being in love. She has done everything in her power to disgust me, and I am pierced to the heart! What object can she have for inventing such a story. Could I have guessed right last night? Oh

you women! Poor Camille may be extremely pious, and perfectly sincere in dedicating herself to God, but she has resolved and decreed that I am to be in despair. It was settled between the dear friends before she left the convent. It was decided that Camille should meet her cousin, that her family should wish for their marriage, that she should refuse him, and that he should be broken-hearted. It made such an interesting story, — a young girl who sacrifices her cousin's happiness to God! No, no, Camille! I do not love you, and I am not in despair, nor pierced to the heart, and I will prove it. Before you leave here, you shall know that I love somebody else. Here! good man! [*Enter a peasant.*] Go to the great house, take this note to the kitchen, and tell them to send it up to Miss Camille by a footman.

[*Writes.*

*Peasant.* Yes, your lordship.

[*Exit.*

*Perdican.* Now for the other! I'm in despair, am I? Ho! Rosette! Rosette!

[*Knocks at her door.*

*Rosette* [*opening it*]. Is it your lordship? Come in, my mother is at home.

*Perdican.* Rosette, put on your smartest cap, and come with me.

*Rosette.* Where to?

*Perdican.* I'll tell you presently; ask your mother and make haste.

*Rosette.* Yes, your lordship.

*Perdican.* I have asked Camille to meet me again, and I know she will come, but by Heaven, she shall find something different from what she expects. I will make love to Rosette before her very eyes.

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SCENE III. — *The spring in the wood.*

*Enter CAMILLE and the peasant.*

*Peasant.* I was taking a letter up to the house for you, miss ; shall I give it to you, or carry it to the kitchen, as Lord Perdican told me ?

*Camille.* Give it to me.

*Peasant.* If you would rather I'd take it to the house I'll carry it there without more ado.

*Camille.* Give it to me I tell you.

*Peasant.* Just as you like.

[*Gives her the letter.*]

*Camille.* There, that's for your trouble.

*Peasant.* Thank you kindly ; I suppose I may go now.

*Camille.* If you will be so good.

*Peasant.* I'm going, I'm going.

[*Exit.*]

*Camille* [*reading*]. Perdican begs me to meet him at the little spring where I told him to come yesterday, to bid me good-by before I go. What can he have to say ? Here's the spring, and I am greatly minded

to wait. Ought I to give him this second meeting? Ah! Here comes Perdican with my foster-sister, Rosette. [*She hides behind a tree.*] I suppose he will send her away; I'm glad not to seem to be here before him. [*Enter PERDICAN and ROSETTE; CAMILLE remains hidden.*] What does this mean? He makes her sit down beside him. Did he ask me to meet him here that he might come and make love to somebody else? I should like to know what he is saying.

*Perdican* [*loud enough to be heard by CAMILLE*]. I love you, Rosette! You are the one person in the world who has not forgotten the dear old times; you alone remember the past. Share the future with me, dear child; give me your heart; take this as a token of our love.

[*Clasps his chain around her neck.*]

*Rosette.* Do you give me your gold chain?

*Perdican.* See this ring. Stand up and come to the edge of the spring. Do you see us both reflected in the water, leaning upon one another? Look at your bright eyes near mine, your hand in mine; now see it all disappear! [*Drops the ring into the water.*] See how the image has vanished; now watch it come back by degrees; the ruffled water is growing smooth again, but it trembles still and great circles are spreading over the surface; have patience and we shall see ourselves again; I can make out your arm linked in mine, already; in another minute there will not be a wrinkle on your pretty face, — see there! It was a ring Camille gave me.

*Camille.* He has thrown my ring into the water!

*Perdican.* Do you know what love is, Rosette? Listen, the wind is hushed, the morning's shower is rolling in great diamonds off the leaves which are reviving in the sunshine. I love you! You love me too, do you not? Your youth has not been dried up; nobody has infused the dregs of their veins into your rosy life-current. You don't want to be a nun; here you are, fresh and lovely, with a young man's arm round you! O Rosette, do you know what love is?

*Rosette.* Alas, your lordship is very learned, but I will love you as well as I know how!

*Perdican.* Yes, as well as you know how; and learned as I am, and rustic as you are, you will love me better than one of those pale statues manufactured by the nuns, with a head instead of a heart, who issue from their cloisters to poison the vital air with the damp reek of their cells. You don't know anything; you can't read the prayer your mother taught you, which she learned from her mother before her; you don't even understand the words you repeat as you kneel at your bedside; but you understand that you are praying, and that is all God requires.

*Rosette.* How your lordship talks!

*Perdican.* You don't know how to read, but you know the language of these woods and meadows, these warm banks, yon fair harvest-fields, and of all this glorious young Nature! You know them for your thousand brothers, and me for one of them.

Come, let us go ; you shall be my wife, and we will strike root into the genial heart of omnipotent creation.

[Exit with Rosette.]

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SCENE IV.

*Enter the CHORUS.*

*Chorus.* Strange things are going on at the great house to-day. Camille refuses to marry Perdican and is going back to her convent this afternoon. But I think his lordship, her cousin, has consoled himself with Rosette. Ah, the poor girl does not know the risk she runs in listening to a gay young gentleman.

[Enter DAME PLUCHE.]

*Dame Pluche.* Quick, quick, saddle my donkey.

*Chorus.* Are you about to vanish like a dream, venerable lady? Are you in such haste to mount the poor beast who is so loath to carry you?

*Dame Pluche.* Heaven be praised, I shall not die here, you amiable herd.

*Chorus.* Die far from hence, beloved Pluche ! Die unknown in some malarious cavern. We will say masses for your respectable resurrection.

*Dame Pluche.* Here comes my young lady. [Enter CAMILLE.] Dear Camille, everything is ready for our departure, the baron has made up his accounts, and my donkey is saddled.

*Camille.* Go to the devil with your donkey! I shall not start to-day.

[*Exit.*

*Chorus.* What does this mean? Dame Pluche is pale with fright! Her false hair struggles to stand on end, her breast heaves and she clenches her bony hands.

*Dame Pluche.* Powers above! Camille swore.

[*Exit.*



## SCENE V.

*Enter the BARON and DOCTOR BRIDAINE.*

*Doctor Bridaine.* My lord, I have something urgent to say; your son is courting one of the village girls.

*Baron.* Nonsense, my good friend.

*Doctor Bridaine.* I distinctly saw him give her his arm as they crossed the common; he was bending over her and promising to marry her.

*Baron.* This is monstrous!

*Doctor Bridaine.* You shall be convinced; he has made her a valuable present which the child showed her mother.

*Baron.* Good heavens, Bridaine, valuable? How valuable?

*Doctor Bridaine.* In weight and material. He gave her the gold chain he wore in his cap.

*Baron.* Come into my study with me. I don't know which way to turn.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI. — *Camille's apartment.*

*Enter CAMILLE and DAME PLUCHE.*

*Camille.* You say he took my letter?

*Dame Pluche.* Yes, dear, he said he would post it.

*Camille.* Be good enough to go to the drawing-room, Dame Pluche, and tell Perdican that I wish to speak to him here. [*Exit DAME PLUCHE.*] He has undoubtedly read my letter; that scene in the wood was revenge, and so is all his love-making to Rosette. He wished to convince me that he loved somebody else, and to hide his mortification under a show of indifference. Does he love me after all, I wonder? [*She raises the tapestry.*] Is that you, Rosette?

*Rosette* [*as she enters*]. Yes; may I come in?

*Camille.* Listen to me, my dear; has not Lord Perdican been making love to you?

*Rosette.* Alas, yes!

*Camille.* What do you think of what he said this morning?

*Rosette.* This morning? Why, where?

*Camille.* Don't be a hypocrite. This morning at the spring in the wood.

*Rosette.* Then you saw me!

*Camille.* Poor little innocent! No, I did not see you. He made all sorts of fine speeches, didn't he? I would wager he promised to marry you.

*Rosette.* Why, how do you know?

*Camille.* Never mind; do you believe his promises, Rosette?

*Rosette.* How can I help it? He wouldn't deceive me. Why should he?

*Camille.* Perdican does not mean to marry you, my child.

*Rosette.* Alas, perhaps not!

*Camille.* You love him, you poor girl; he does not mean to marry you, and I will give you the proof; hide behind this curtain; you have nothing to do but to listen and come when I call you.

[Exit ROSETTE.]

*Camille.* I thought to do an act of vengeance, but may it not be one of humanity? The poor child has lost her heart. [Enter PERDICAN.] Good morning, cousin, sit down.

*Perdican.* How beautifully you are dressed, Camille! On whom have you designs?

*Camille.* On you, perhaps. I am very-sorry that I could not meet you as you asked; had you anything to say?

*Perdican* [aside]. Upon my word that's rather a big fib for a spotless lamb! I saw her under the trees. [Aloud.] I had nothing to say but good-by, Camille; I thought you were going, but your horse is in the stable, and you do not seem to be dressed for travelling.

*Camille.* I am fond of discussion, and I am not sure that I did not wish for another quarrel with you.

*Perdican.* What object can there be in quarrelling when there is no possibility of making up? The pleasure of disputes is in making peace.

*Camille.* Are you so sure I wouldn't make peace?

*Perdican.* Don't jest; I am not equal to answering you.

*Camille.* I want to be made love to! I don't know whether it is because I have on a new gown, but I wish to be amused. You proposed our going to the village, — well, I am ready. Let us row; I should like to dine on the grass, or to ramble in the forest. Will it be moonlight this evening? How odd! you have not on the ring I gave you.

*Perdican.* I lost it.

*Camille.* So I found it; here it is, Perdican.

*Perdican.* Is it possible! Where did you find it?

*Camille.* You are looking to see whether my hands are wet? To tell the truth, I spoiled my convent dress in getting this trinket out of the spring. That is why I put another on, and I tell you it has changed me; so put that upon your finger.

*Perdican.* You got this out of the water at the risk of falling in, Camille? Am I dreaming? Here it is again, and you put it on my finger. Oh Camille, why do you give me back this sad relic of my lost happiness? Tell me, you foolish and fickle girl, why you go away? Why do you stay? Why do you change every hour like this stone in each new light?

*Camille.* Do you know woman's heart, Perdican?

Are you convinced of her inconstancy, and that she really changes her mind whenever she changes her mood? Some say not. Undoubtedly we are often forced to play a part, even to tell lies, — I am frank, you see, — but are you sure that everything in a woman lies when her tongue lies? Have you ever reflected on the nature of this weak and undisciplined creature, and on the severity with which she is judged, and the part that she is compelled to play? Who knows whether, constrained by the world to continual deceit, the head of this brainless being may not finally learn to take a certain pleasure in it; may she not tell lies for amusement sometimes, as she is so often forced to tell them for necessity?

*Perdican.* I understand none of this; I never lie; I love you, Camille, and that is all I know.

*Camille.* You say you love me and that you never lie?

*Perdican.* Never!

*Camille.* Yet here's somebody who says that accident befalls you occasionally. [*She raises the tapestry and shows ROSETTE fainting in a chair.*] What will you say to this child, Perdican, when she asks you to account for your words? If you never lie, why has she fainted on hearing you say that you love me? I leave her with you; try and bring her to life.

[*Is about to go.*]

*Perdican.* One moment, Camille! Hear me!

*Camille.* What have you to say to me? It is to

Rosette you must answer. I do not love you ; I did not seek this hapless child in her cottage to use her as a toy, a foil ; I did not recklessly repeat to her the burning words I had addressed to others ; I did not feign to cast to the winds the tokens of a cherished attachment, for her sake ; I did not put my chain round her neck ; I did not promise to marry her !

*Perdican.* Listen to me ! listen to me !

*Camille.* I saw you smile just now when I said I had not been able to go to the fountain. Yes, I was there and heard it all, but God is my witness that I would not have done as you did. What will you do with that girl now, when, with your kisses still burning on her lips, she weeps and points to the wound you have dealt her ? You wished to revenge yourself upon me, did you not, for a letter I wrote to my convent ? You were bent on piercing my soul at any cost, not caring whether your poisoned dart wounded this child, if it but struck me through her. I had boasted of having made you love me, and of causing you regret. Did that wound your noble pride ? Well then, hear me say it, — you love me, but you will marry that girl, or you are a poor creature.

*Perdican.* Yes, I will marry her.

*Camille.* You will do well.

*Perdican.* Very well, and much better than if I married you. What excites you to such a degree, Camille ? The child has fainted ; we can easily bring her to, we only need a smelling-bottle. You wish to

convict me of having lied once in my life, and you have done so, but I think you are rather self-confident in deciding when. Come, help me to restore Rosette.

[*Exeunt.*]

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SCENE VII.

*Enter BARON and CAMILLE.*

*Baron.* If it takes place I shall go mad

*Camille.* Use your authority.

*Baron.* I shall go mad, and I will refuse my consent, that's certain.

*Camille.* You ought to speak to him and make him listen to reason.

*Baron.* It will drive me to despair during the entire carnival, and I shall not go to court once next season. It is the most unequal match! Who ever heard of marrying your cousin's foster-sister? It passes all bounds.

*Camille.* Send for him and tell him plainly that you disapprove of the marriage. Depend upon it, this is a mere freak, and he will not resist your authority.

*Baron.* I shall certainly wear mourning all winter.

*Camille.* But in Heaven's name, speak to him! He is going to commit an act of madness; perhaps it is too late already; if he has announced his intentions, he will do it.

*Baron.* I am going to shut myself up and give way to my grief; if he asks for me tell him I have

shut myself up, and that I am giving way to my grief at his marrying a nameless girl.

[*Exit.*]

*Camille.* Is there not one man here? When one tries to find him, one is absolutely terrified by the solitude! [*Enter PERDICAN.*] Well, cousin, when is the wedding to be?

*Perdican.* As soon as possible; I have spoken to the notary, the priest, and all the villagers.

*Camille.* Then you really mean to marry Rosette?

*Perdican.* Most assuredly.

*Camille.* What will your father say?

*Perdican.* Whatever he likes. It pleases me to marry the girl; I owe the idea to you, and I hold by it. What is the use of repeating the worn-out common-places about her family and mine? She is young and pretty and in love with me; I need no more to be trebly happy. Whether she has brains or not, I might have done worse. People may exclaim and laugh; I have nothing to do with them.

*Camille.* There is nothing to laugh at in it; you are quite right to marry her. There is only one thing I am sorry for; people will say you have done it from pique.

*Perdican.* You sorry for that? No indeed!

*Camille.* Yes, I am sorry for your sake. It injures a young man to have it said that he yielded to a moment's irritation.

*Perdican.* Be sorry then; for my part I care not a jot.

*Camille.* But you don't really think of it? — the girl is nobody.

*Perdican.* She will be somebody when she is my wife.

*Camille.* She will weary you to death before the notary has put on his new coat and shoes for the occasion; you will be disgusted at the wedding-supper, and will have her hands and feet cut off on the wedding-night, as they do in the Arabian Nights, because she smells of the kitchen.

*Perdican.* You will see that you are wrong; you do not know me; when a woman is sensible and gentle, fresh, good, and handsome, I can content myself with that, yes, actually so far as not even to care whether she understands Latin.

*Camille.* It is a pity that so much money was spent in teaching it to you; three thousand crowns thrown away.

*Perdican.* Yes, it would have been much better bestowed upon the poor.

*Camille.* You can do that yourself, at least to the poor in spirit.

*Perdican.* They will give me the kingdom of heaven in exchange, for it is theirs.

*Camille.* How long is this farce to last?

*Perdican.* What farce?

*Camille.* Your marriage to Rosette?

*Perdican.* Not very long. God has not made man a durable work; thirty or forty years at the utmost.

*Camille.* I am impatient to dance at your wedding.

*Perdican.* Look here, Camille, this bantering is out of place.

*Camille.* I enjoy it too much to relinquish it.

*Perdican.* Then I must relinquish your society, for I have had enough of it for the present.

*Camille.* Are you going to your betrothed?

*Perdican.* Yes, this moment.

*Camille.* Give me your arm; I will go too.

[Enter ROSETTE.]

*Perdican.* Here you are, my child! Come, I wish to present you to my father.

*Rosette* [*falling on her knees.*] I have come to ask a favor of your lordship. All the village people to whom I have spoken this morning, say that you are in love with your cousin, and that you have courted me only to amuse yourself and her; they make fun of me as I pass, and I shall never be able to find a husband after having been the laughing-stock of the neighborhood. Let me give you back the chain you gave me, and go live quietly with my mother.

*Camille.* You are a good girl, Rosette; keep the chain; I give it to you, and I will give him mine in its place. As to a husband, don't be afraid; I will find you one.

*Perdican.* That will not be difficult. Come, Rosette, let me take you to my father.

*Camille.* Why? It will be of no use.

*Perdican.* True, my father would not receive us well; we must let him get over his first surprise. Come with me and we will go to the village-green. I like their saying I don't love you when I am going to marry you. By the Lord! we will soon silence them.

[*Exit with ROSETTE.*]

*Camille.* What is the matter with me? He leads her away deliberately. How strange! my head swims. Is he really going to marry her? Here! here! Dame Pluche! — will nobody come? [*Enter a footman.*] Run after Lord Perdican and tell him to come back immediately, I wish to speak to him. [*Exit footman.*] But what is the matter with me? I can't stand, my knees won't support me.

[*Enter PERDICAN.*]

*Perdican.* Did you send for me, Camille?

*Camille.* No, no!

*Perdican.* How pale you are! What have you to say? Didn't you send word that you wished to speak to me?

*Camille.* No — no. — Oh great God!

[*Exit.*]

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SCENE VIII. — *An oratory.*

*Enter CAMILLE.* *She throws herself at the foot of the altar.*

*Camille.* Oh my God, hast thou abandoned me?

Thou knowest that I came hither faithful to thee ; when I refused to take another spouse, thou knowest that I spoke in all sincerity before thee and my own soul ; thou knowest it, oh Father ! and wilt thou no longer accept me ? Oh wherefore hast thou made truth itself to lie ? Why am I so weak ? Ah, wretched girl ! I cannot even pray.

[Enter PERDICAN.

*Perdican.* Pride, most fatal of all the counsellors of humanity, why have you come between me and this girl ? See her, pale and distraught, pressing her face and breast against these senseless stones. She could have loved me, and we were born for one another. Oh pride ! what brought you to our lips when our hands were ready to be joined ?

*Camille.* Who has followed me ? Whose voice do I hear beneath this vault ? Is it you, Perdican ?

*Perdican.* Fools that we are ! We love each other ? What have you been dreaming, Camille ? What futile speech, what wretched folly has swept between us like a blast from the tombs ? Which of us tried to deceive the other ? Alas, when life itself is such a painful dream, why seek to fill it with worse ones of our own ? Oh God ! happiness is a pearl so rarely found in this stormy sea ! thou hadst given it to us, thou hadst rescued this treasure from the abyss for us, and, like spoiled children as we are, we treated it as a plaything. The green path which led us toward each other sloped so gently, and was so strewn

with flowers, it vanished in such a calm horizon — needs was that words, and vanity, and anger should hurl their shapeless crags across this celestial path, which would have led us to thee in an embrace! Needs was that we should wrong and wound each other, for we are human! Oh fools! fools! and we love each other!

[*He clasps her in his arms.*]

*Camille.* Yes, Perdican, we love each other! Let me feel it on your heart. The God who sees us will not be angry; he wills that I should love you; he has known it these fifteen years.

*Perdican.* Dearest being, you are mine!

[*He kisses her; a shriek is heard from behind the altar.*]

*Camille.* My foster-sister's voice!

*Perdican.* How came she here? I left her on the staircase when you sent for me. She must have followed me without my knowledge.

*Camille.* Come this way, — the cry came from here.

*Perdican.* What do I fear? my hands seem bathed in blood.

*Camille.* The poor child must have overheard us, and she has fainted again; come and help her! Ah, it is all too cruel.

*Perdican.* No, I cannot go — I am numb with mortal terror. Go, Camille, and try to help her. [*Exit CAMILLE.*] Oh God, I beseech thee, make me not a murderer! Thou seest our hearts; we are two

senseless children who have been playing with life and death. God of justice, do not let Rosette die ! I will find her a husband, I will repair the evil I have done, — she is young, she shall be rich and happy. Oh do not refuse me this, my God ! thou canst bless four of thy children ! [*Reënter CAMILLE.*] Well, Camille ?

*Camille.* She is dead. — Farewell, Perdican.



## POEMS.



## POEMS.

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“FOR BOTH WERE FAITHS, AND BOTH  
ARE GONE.”

WOULD'ST thou recall the days, when upon earth  
Heaven dwelt and breathed among a race divine ?  
When Venus rose, still virgin, from the brine,  
Shook from her limbs the tear-drops of her birth,  
And wringing from her hair the mother-wave,  
Joy and fecundity to Nature gave ?  
The days when 'mid the flow'ring water-weeds  
Buoyed in the sunshine, lay the wanton nymph,  
Intent with saucy laughter to provoke,  
The lazy faun stretched out among the reeds ?  
When lone Narcissus kissed the trembling lymph,  
When mocking Dryads hid in every oak,  
Or started from the bark, their green abode,  
On bending branches in the wind to sway,  
While Echo warbled back the traveller's lay ?  
When Hercules throughout creation strode  
In blood-stained mantle of the lion's hide,  
With everlasting Justice at his side ?  
When all was godlike, even human pain,

And men paid worship to what now is slain ?  
All happy, — save Prometheus alone,  
He, Satan's elder-born, and fall'n like him.

Or when the breath of change passed cold and dim  
O'er all, earth, man, and heaven, like a cloud,  
And the world's cradle had become its tomb :  
When from the North the avalanche of doom  
O'er Rome's vast ruin wrapped its icy shroud :

Would'st thou recall the days, when as at first  
A savage age brought forth an age of gold ?  
When like to Lazarus the dead earth burst  
Fresh from her tomb, and back the grave-stone  
rolled ?

The days when spreading wide its golden wings,  
Romance for realms enchanted took its flight ;  
Our monuments, our creeds, our sacred things  
Still wore unsullied robes of virgin white ?  
When 'neath Christ's master-hand all lived anew,  
When the priest's home, the prince's palace high,  
The self-same radiant cross upheld to view,  
Based on the mountain, looking towards the sky ?  
When Notre Dame, St Peter's, and Cologne,  
And Strasbourg, kneeling in their cloaks of stone,  
Poured with the organ of a world in prayer  
The centuries' grand birth-psalm thro' the air ?  
When deeds were done which history has sung ;  
The ivory rood o'er hallowed altars hung,  
Its spotless arms to all mankind did ope,  
When life was young, and even death could hope !

Oh Christ ! I am not one of those who greet  
Thy silent fanes with reverential tread ;  
I seek not Calvary with bended head,  
To beat my breast, and kiss thy bleeding feet ;  
Beside thy sacred doors I stand aloof  
When in the shadow of the vaulted roof,  
'Neath murmured chants, the faithful bow their knees,  
As bends a tribe of reeds before the breeze ;  
Thy holy gospel I do not revere ;  
I came too late into this aged world ;  
From hopeless times, spring times devoid of fear ;  
Our comets from the sky thy stars have hurled ;  
And chance now wanders with the wakened years  
Robbed of illusion, through the darkened spheres,  
Where down the gulf the spirits of the past  
Thy mutilated angels headlong cast.  
The nails of Golgotha scarce thee uphold,  
Thy sacred sepulchre is bare of mould,  
Thy glory fades, thy form celestial falls  
In dust from off the cross upon our walls.

Well, let me kneel and kiss that sacred dust,  
Me, offspring of an age devoid of trust,  
And weep, oh Christ, for this cold earth which aye  
Lived by thy death, and must without thee die.  
Oh God ! and who shall bid it now revive,  
This earth thy blood alone could make alive ?  
Who shall repeat what thou hast done in vain,  
And we, born old, who make us young again ?

## ON THREE STEPS OF ROSE-COLORED MARBLE.

SINCE erst that garden, known to fame,  
Was lost by Adam, — cruel man, —  
Where without a skirt, his dame  
Round an apple frisked and ran,  
I do not think that on this earth  
'Mid its most notable plantations  
Has been a spot more praised, more famed,  
More choice, more cited, oftener named,  
Than thy most tedious park, Versailles !  
Oh gods ! oh shepherds ! rocky vales !  
Oh sulky Termes, satyrs old !  
Oh pleasing scenes ! oh charming views !  
Sweet landscape, where one may behold,  
Ranged onion-wise, the little yews ;  
Oh quincunx ! fountain, bowling-green,  
Where every summer Sabbath-e'en  
On pleasure bent, one yawning sees  
So many honest families.  
And ye, imperial Roman shades !  
Ye naiads, pale and stony maids,  
Holding your hands outstretched to all  
And shivering in your waterfall !

Stiles, modelled in obliging bushes ;  
Ye formal groves, wherein the thrushes  
Seek plaintively their native cry ;  
Ye water-gods, who vainly try  
Beneath your fountains to be dry ;  
Ye chestnut-trees, be not afraid  
That I shall vex your ancient shade,  
Knowing that at sundry times  
I have perpetrated rhymes :  
No such ruthless thought is mine.  
No ! I swear it by Apollo,  
I swear it by the sacred Nine,  
By nymphs within their basins hollow,  
Who softly on three flints recline,  
By yon old faun, quaint dancing-master,  
Who trips it on the sward in plaster,  
By thee thyself, august abode,  
Who know'st save Art no other guest,  
I swear by Neptune, watery god,  
My verses shall not break your rest !  
I know too well what is the matter ;  
The god of song has plagued you sore ;  
The poets, with their ceaseless chatter,  
You brood in mournful silence o'er :  
So many madrigals and odes,  
Songs, ballads, sonnets, and epodes,  
In which your wonders have been sung  
Your tired ears have sadly wrung,  
Until you slumber to the chimes  
Of these interminable rhymes.

Amid these haunts where dwells ennui  
For mere conformity I slept,  
Or 'twas not sleep that o'er me crept,  
If, dreaming, one awake may be.  
Oh say, my friend, do you recall  
Three marble steps, of rosy hue,  
Upon your way toward the lake,  
When that delicious path you take  
That leads the orangery through,  
Left-turning from the palace wall?  
I would wager it was here  
Came the monarch without peer,  
In the sunset, red and clear,  
Down the forest dim to see  
Day take flight and disappear, —  
If the day could so forget  
What was due to etiquette.  
But what pretty steps are those!  
Cursed be the foot, said we,  
That would stain their tints of rose, —  
Say, do you remember yet?

With what soft shades is clouded o'er  
This defaced and broken floor!  
See the veins of azure deep  
Through the paler rose-tints creep;  
Trace the slender, branching line  
In the marble, pure and fine;  
So through huntress Dian's breast

White and firm as Alpine snows,  
The celestial ichor flows ;  
Such the hand, and still more cold,  
Led me leashed in days of old.  
Don't confound these steps so rare  
With that other staircase where  
The monarch grand, who could not wait,  
Waited on Condé, stair by stair,  
When he came with weary gait,  
War-worn and victorious there.  
Near a marble vase are these,  
Of graceful shape and white as snow,  
Whether 'tis classic or Chinese,  
Antique, or modern, others know.  
I leave the question in their hands ;  
It is not Gothic, I can swear ;  
Much I like it where it stands,  
Worthy vase, and neighbor kind,  
And to think it I'm inclined  
Cousin to my rosy stair,  
Guarding it with jealous care.  
Oh, to see in such small space  
So much beauty, so much grace !

Lovely staircase, tell us true,  
How many princes, prelates proud,  
Kings, marquises, — a pompous crowd, —  
And ladies fair, have swept o'er you ?  
Ah, these last, as I should guess,

Did not vex thee with their state,  
Nor didst thou groan beneath the weight  
Of ermine cloak or velvet dress :  
Tell us, of that ambitious band  
Whose dainty footstep lightest fell ;  
Was it the regal Montespan ?  
Hortense, a novel in her hand ?  
De Maintenon with beads to tell ?  
Or gay Fontanges, with knot and fan ?  
Didst ever look on La Vallière ?  
And tell us, marble, if you can,  
Which of the twain you thought most fair  
De Parabère or De Sabran ?  
'Twixt Sabran and De Parabère  
The very Regent could not choose  
When supper did his wits confuse.  
Didst ever see the great Voltaire,  
Who waged such war on superstition,  
Who to defy the Christ did dare ;  
He, who aspired to the position  
Of sexton to Cytherea's fane,  
When to the Pompadour he brought  
His compliments, and fulsome strain,  
The holy water of the court.  
Hast beheld the plump Dubarry  
Accoutred like a country lass,  
Sipping milk, beside thee tarry,  
Or tripping barefoot through the grass ?

Stones who know our country's story,  
What a variegated throng  
In your by-gone days of glory  
Down your steps have swept along!  
The gay world lounged beneath these trees,  
Lords and lackeys drank the breeze;  
There was every sort of cattle;  
Oh the duchesses! the tattle,  
Oh the brave red heels that dangled  
Round the ladies, flounced and spangle  
Oh the gossip! oh the sighs!  
Oh the flash of brilliant eyes!  
Oh the feathers! oh the stoles!  
Oh the powder on their polls!  
Oh the furbelows and breeches  
Underneath those spreading beeches!  
How many folk — not counting fools —  
By the ancient fountain-pools!  
Ah! it was the good old time  
Of the periwig sublime;  
Lives the cockney who dares grudge  
One iota of its state,  
He deserves, as I adjudge,  
On his thick, plebeian pate  
Now and evermore, to wear  
Other ornament than hair.  
Century of mocking wood,  
Age of powder and of paste,  
He who does not find thee good,

Writes himself devoid of taste,  
Lacking sentiment, and stupid,  
Votary abhorred by Cupid.  
Rosy marble is't, not so ?  
Yet, despite myself, I trow  
Though here thy fate is fixed by chance,  
Other destiny was thine ;  
Far away from cloudy France,  
Where a warmer sun doth shine,  
Near some temple, Greek or Latin,  
The fair daughters of the clime  
With the scent of heath and thyme  
Clinging to their sandalled feet,  
Treading thee in rhythmic dance,  
Were a burden far more sweet  
Than court-ladies, shod with satin.  
Could it be for this alone  
Nature formed thee in the earth,  
In whose beauteous, virgin stone,  
Genius might have wrought a birth  
Every age had joyed to own ?  
When with trowel and with spade  
In this muddy, modern park  
Thou in solemn state wert laid,  
Then the outraged gods might mark  
What the times had brought about, —  
**Mansard**, in his triumph, flout  
Praxiteles' injured shade !

There should have come forth of thee  
Some new-born divinity.  
When the marble-cutters hewed  
Through thy noble block their way,  
They broke in, with footsteps rude,  
Where a Venus sleeping lay ;  
And the goddess' wounded veins  
Colored thee with roseate stains.

Alas ! and must we count it truth  
That every rare and precious thing,  
Flung forth at random, without ruth,  
Trodden underfoot may lie ?  
The crag, where, in sublime repose,  
The eagle stoops to rest his wing,  
No less than any way-side rose  
Dropped in the common dust to die.  
Can the mother of us all  
Leave her work, to fullness brought,  
Lost in the gulf of chance to fall,  
As oblivion swallows thought ?  
Torn away from ocean's rim  
To be fashioned at a whim,  
Does the briny tempest hurl  
To the workman's feet, the pearl ?  
Shall the vulgar, idle crowd  
For all ages be allowed  
To degrade earth's choicest treasure,  
At the arbitrary pleasure  
Of a mason or a churl ?

## ON THE DEATH OF MALIBRAN.

OH Marie Felicia ! the painter and bard,  
Leave children immortal as heirs to their fame ;  
Their great, eager natures, from action debarred,  
Turn dauntlessly time and destruction to tame ;  
They perish as victors struck down in the fight,  
Not lost and forgotten in fathomless night.

For one upon brass has engraven his thought ;  
Another has breathed it in musical rhyme ;  
We hear it and straightway to love him are taught ;  
And Raphael has left it on canvas sublime :  
That death all unharmed shall his memory keep  
It needs but a child, on his mother, asleep.

As the lamp guards the flame, so the desolate halls  
Of the Parthenon guard, all undimmed and serene,  
The glory of Phidias shrined in their walls ;  
And Praxiteles' child, Aphrodite the queen,  
Erect in her beauty immortal, still smiles  
On the centuries vanquished and 'slaved by her wiles.

To the Godhead returns all the glorious past,  
Upraised by each age to a loftier place ;

Thus the echoes of genius in unison vast

Become the great voice of the whole human race ;  
But of thee, oh poor Marie ! just dead in thy bloom,  
Remains but a cross, in a chapel's cold gloom.

Night, silence, oblivion, a cross — and no more !

Oh list ! 'tis the wind, 'tis the voice of the sea,  
'Tis a fisher who sings on his way by the shore, —  
But of beauty, hope, promise, and fame, lavished  
free,

Of that heavenly lyre's sweet, manifold strains,  
No lingering echo, no whisper remains.

\* \* \* \* \*

## RECOLLECTION.

I FEARED to suffer, though I hoped to weep  
In seeing thee again, thou hallowed ground,  
Where ever dear remembrance for her sleep  
A tomb has found.

Friends, in this solitude what did you dread,  
Why did ye seek my footsteps to restrain,  
When sweet and ancient custom hither led  
My feet again ?

Here are these haunts beloved, the flow'ry waste,  
The silvery foot-prints on the silent sand,  
The paths, where lost in love-talk sweet we paced,  
Hand locked in hand.

Here are the pine-trees with their sombre green,  
The deep ravine, with rocky, winding ways,  
Lulled by whose ancient murmurs I have seen  
Such happy days.

Here are the thickets, where my joyous youth  
Sings like a choir of birds in every tree ;

Sweet wilds, that saw my mistress pass, in sooth  
Looked ye for me ?

Nay, let them flow, for they are precious tears,  
The tears that from a heart unhardened rise,  
Nor brush away this mist of by-gone years  
From off mine eyes !

I shall not wake with vain and bitter cry  
The echo of these woods, where I was blest ;  
Proud is the forest in its beauty high,  
Proud is my breast.

Let him devote himself to endless woes  
Who kneels alone beside a loved one's tomb ;  
But here all breathes of life, the church-yard rose  
Here does not bloom.

And lo ! the moon is rising through the shades ;  
Her glance still trembles, "beauteous queen of  
night ;"  
But all the dark horizon she pervades  
With growing light.

As all the perfumes of the buried day  
Rise from this soil, still humid with the rain,  
So from my softened breast, beneath her ray,  
Rises my love again.

Whither have fled the griefs that made me old ?  
Vanished is all that vexed my life before,  
I grow, as I this friendly vale behold,  
    A child once more.

Oh fatal power of time ! oh fleeting hours !  
Our tears, our cries, our vain regrets ye hush,  
But pity moves you, and our faded flowers  
    Ye do not crush.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ADVICE TO A GAY LADY.

YES, were I a woman, charming and pretty,  
I think I should do,  
Fair Julia, as you ;  
Without fear or favor, distinction or pity,  
Smile and make eyes  
At all 'neath the skies.

In all the earth's orbit, my elegant waist,  
And what I should wear,  
Should be my sole care ;  
The puppet of most irreproachable taste  
Abroad or at home,  
From Paris to Rome.

I would seek as the only true science and lore  
That careless repose  
Which you wear like a rose,  
And to giddiness add as a grace the more  
That semblance of thought  
Which thinks about naught.

I would live in perpetual *fête*, and aspire  
To dazzle the brain  
Of even Disdain ;  
To be in one moment all ice and all fire,  
With smiles to conceal  
The hatred I feel.

Moreover, I would above all things eschew  
That obsolete pink  
From which our eyes shrink ;  
Amid my brown locks I would gleam on the view  
Like a moonbeam white  
From the hood of night.

How charming it is, and convenient besides,  
This indolent way.  
The style of the day,  
And the pallor which nothing or everything hides ;  
Never too far apart  
The face and the heart !

Your very caprice I would willingly share ;  
Your innocent sighs,  
Your experienced eyes ;  
I adore you to such a degree, that I swear  
I'd be wholly you  
For a year or two.

On one single point, I am forced to confess,  
Your habitual skill  
Seems to serve you but ill ;  
You cannot endure to occasion distress ;  
From your pride you'd be freed, —  
But you want it, indeed.

My statue-like arm I should scruple to yield  
To each and to all  
At rout and at ball ;  
Nor in the cotillion's promiscuous field,  
Resign my white hand  
At every demand.

If I felt the clasp of a daring arm  
Too rashly braced  
Round my slender waist,  
I confess I should be in mortal alarm  
Lest my cobweb lace  
Should show its trace.

Each partner in turn, o'er your shoulder white,  
Recites his part  
Of a broken heart ;  
If my dignity did not, my beauty might  
Resent being wooed  
In such careless mood.

No, if I were Julia, I would not see  
In my cherished beauty  
My only duty ;  
To the finger-tips I a duchess would be,  
And treasure my pride  
More than all beside.

For, my dear, at the present day, you must know  
Most men that we find  
Have a roving mind.  
Of two lovers with ardent zeal all aglow  
With one half I fear  
It is pastime mere.

And if you would flirt, you must also be wise ;  
The swallow of spring  
Who sleeps on the wing  
Is not like the pinion of alien skies,  
Which for farewell token  
Leaves a flow'ret broken.

## A PORTRAIT.

YES, she was fair, if fair be hight  
That dumb, eternal, stony sleep,  
The sculptor's monumental Night  
Hides in her chapel's twilight deep.

And she was good, if goodness be  
With passive hand to scatter gold,  
Though God the deed nor bless, nor see,  
Nor own as alms such bounty cold.

She prayed indeed, if two dark eyes,  
Now bent on earth with pensive air,  
And now uplifted to the skies, —  
If that alone be counted prayer.

She would have wept, if the white palm  
That on her breast so coldly lay,  
Had ever felt the precious balm,  
The dew divine in human clay.

She might have loved, perhaps, but pride,  
Like to the useless taper, placed

In funeral rites, the pall beside,  
Guarded her heart's hard, sterile, waste.

She has not lived, and she is dead,  
She only lived to outward view,  
And from her fingers drops unread  
The book whose text she never knew.

## VERGISS MEIN NICHT.

REMEMBER ! when the morn with sweet affright  
Opens her portals to the king of day ;  
Remember ! when the melancholy night  
All silver-veiled pursues her darkling way ;  
Or when thy pulses wake at pleasure's tone ;  
When twilight shades to gentle dreams invite,  
List to a voice which from the forest lone  
Murmurs, Remember !

Remember ! when inexorable fate  
Hath parted finally my lot from thine,  
When absence, grief, and time have laid their weight  
With crushing power on this heart of mine ;  
Think of my love, think of my last farewell,  
Absence nor time can constancy abate, —  
While my heart beats its every throb shall tell  
Remember !

Remember ! when beneath the chilling ground  
My weary heart has found a lasting sleep,  
And when in after time, above the mound,  
The pale blue flower its gentle watch doth keep ;

I shall not see thee more, but ever nigh,  
Like sister true my soul will hover round,  
List to a voice which through the night will sigh  
Remember !

## PALE STAR OF EVEN.

PALE star of even, on thy distant quest  
Lifting thy radiant brow from twilight's veil,  
From out thy azure palace in the west,  
What seest thou in the dale?  
The storm recedes, the winds are lulled to rest,  
The shivering trees weep on the grass beneath,  
The evening butterfly, with gilded crest,  
Flits o'er the fragrant heath.  
What seekest thou on Nature's sleeping breast?  
Down toward the mountains thou art sinking fast,  
Sinking and smiling, sweet and pensive guest;  
Thy tremulous gaze has almost looked its last.

Sad, silvery tear on evening's mantle brown,  
Slow gliding downward to the verdant steep,  
The shepherd sees thee, as across the down  
He homeward leads his lingering flock of sheep.  
Star, at this silent hour so strangely fair,  
Through boundless night, oh, whither dost thou go?  
To seek beside the shore a reedy lair,  
Or like a pearl, sink in the gulf below?

Oh if thy glowing tresses thou must wet  
In ocean's brine, fair star, if thou must die,  
Ere thou forsake us, stay a moment yet ;  
Sweet star of love ! ah, do not leave the sky !

## A LAST WORD.

THING of a day ! Fret out thy little hour ;  
Whence thy unceasing plaint, thy bitter cry ?  
And why in tears consume thy spirit's pow'r ?  
Immortal is thy soul, thy tears will dry.

Thy heart is racked and wrung by love betrayed,  
Beneath the strain 'twill break, or cease to feel ;  
Thou prayest God to hasten to thine aid ;  
Immortal is thy soul, thy heart will heal.

By longing and regret thy life is torn,  
The past shuts out the future from thine eye ;  
Grieve not for yesterday, — await the morn ;  
Immortal is thy soul, time passes by.

Thy form is bent beneath oppressive thought,  
Thy brow is burdened, and thy limbs give way ;  
Oh bow the knee ! fall prostrate, thing of naught !  
Immortal is thy soul, death frees thy clay.

Thy mouldering form its mother-earth will feed,  
Thy glory, name, and memory must die,  
But not thy love, if thou hast loved indeed,  
Thy deathless soul will cherish it on high.













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